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CRITERIA FOR CLASSIFYING LOUISIANA TENANTS

by

Ralph J. Ramsey

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## CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

For a number of years the Federal Bureau of Census has been calling attention to the increase in the proportion of farms operated by tenants. Since 1906 the United States Department of Agriculture has been engaged in research having to do with the varying objectives and degrees of intensity of tenancy. Many agencies have been concerned with the economic and social problems that it presents. Many popular books have been written concerning the condition of tenants in certain areas, especially that of the sharecropper in the cotton South. These studies have been descriptive of local conditions or generalized statements based chiefly upon census definitions.<sup>2</sup> A generalized conclusion reached in the past few years for the United States is that tenancy is increasing and that it is a bad situation.

<sup>1</sup> This is a revision of a thesis presented by the author as partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts degree at Louisiana State University, June, 1940, under the direction of Dr. Harold C. Hoffsommer.

The data used are taken from the Type of Tenancy Area Study, a cooperative study between the Division of Land Economics and the Louisiana Agricultural Experiment Station. The author is employed as cooperative agent with the study.

<sup>2</sup> Marshall Harris, Some Preliminary Notes on the Type of Tenancy Studies, Washington, April 28, 1939, unpublished, p. 1.

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by

Walter L. Hensley

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

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The Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy was very much concerned with the tenant group as being, on the whole, insecure. It reports, "Although in all areas of the United States there are notable instances of desirable relationships between tenants and landlords, tenancy conditions, in many cases and areas, are unsatisfactory to both tenant and landlord, are condemned by both, and are objectionable from the point of view of social welfare."<sup>3</sup> All of its recommendations were concerned with the insecure members of all tenure groups. This and other tenancy improvement programs such as the Farm Security Administration program have been handicapped because of the lack of knowledge as to the types of tenancy over large areas. In areas where a large number of farms are operated by tenants, or are using farm laborers, all action programs and planning agencies are likewise handicapped.

In the words of Marshall Harris, "Because of these situations, it seems that there is a definite need for delimiting the various types of tenancy throughout the entire country, and in describing in considerable detail the major variations in the farm tenancy situation from one section of the country to another in order that research and planning studies and activities and action programs may become more useful and effective."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, National Resources Committee, Washington, 1937, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Marshall Harris, op. cit., p. 1.





### Objectives

The object of this study is to develop criteria for determining types of tenancy situations in Louisiana. The primary task is one of classification and methodology, so that similar methods might be used to determine comparable types of tenants in other areas. The causal factors of tenancy and the programs that might result in an improved tenancy situation are regarded as subsidiary objectives and are treated only insofar as they aid in delineating a type of tenancy.

### Scope

The study was concerned mainly with tenancy in Louisiana, although some comparisons are made with other states, the South, and the United States as a whole. Insofar as possible the classification applies to the year 1939. However, census data for 1920, 1930, and 1940 were used to check the data secured in 1939. In using the 1930 census data it was realized that a number of changes have taken place in Louisiana agriculture since that time. Among these are increased mechanization, the AAA program, the Soil Conservation program, price changes in various farm commodities, droughts, changes in credit facilities, and shifts in the farm population to adjust itself to these changes. However, it was thought that this measure of tenure characteristics of a years ago would supplement the data secured from the present sample. In addition, the census data were beneficial in checking the primary data. The resulting classification of tenancy as herein presented applies to the situation in Louisiana in 1939.





All of the tenancy situations in the State are allocated in a relatively few categories. Subgroups are described where they appeared to be important, and others are indicated. In cases where a type of tenancy is concentrated in a particular area, that area is indicated.

Owner operators and farm laborers are included in the study, since they, as well as tenants, are part of farm tenure and there is both a social relationship and an interchange of individuals among the three categories. In the business of farming the three opportunities for income are from ownership, tenancy and farm labor with the proportion of these varying from one locality to another. It is quite likely that the percentage distribution of these three elementary classes has an important effect on the type of tenancy. In some areas, unpaid family labor and wage labor are merely steps to tenancy, and tenancy in turn a step to ownership. In those areas where these steps are easy, the percentage of owner operators is likely to be high.

## CHAPTER II

### NATURE OF TENANCY PROBLEMS

Tenancy is a characteristic which is not peculiar to the South, the United States, or even to the modern world. Any historical document on farming shows that the man who does the work is not always the owner of the land. Many farmers in the feudal system paid a share of the crop as "tithes" for protection and use of the land. Biblical stories of stock share leasing and many other examples are well known.





The history of tenancy in the United States is not adaptable to statistical treatment. Goldenweiser and Treadwell have stated, "There is no statistical information on American land tenure prior to 1880, but there is evidence that farm tenancy in the United States is nearly as old as the settlement of the country, though the number and proportion of the tenants doubtless remained small so long as free land was abundant. It was during the last 10 years of the nineteenth century that the greatest increase in farm tenancy occurred."<sup>5</sup> From 1880 to 1935 the percentage of farm operators who were tenants increased in the United States from 25.6 per cent to 42.1 per cent. During the same period the tenants in Louisiana increased from 35.2 per cent to 63.7 per cent.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to these tenants about 10 per cent of the nation's operators were classified as part owners in that they owned some land and rented additional land. This group comprised 3.8 per cent of all the Louisiana farm operators in 1935.

#### Tenancy in Louisiana

The rather commonly supposed fact that all Negroes on Southern farms became sharecroppers following the Civil War is not susceptible

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<sup>5</sup> E. J. Goldenweiser and Leon E. Treadwell, Farm Tenancy in the United States, Census Monograph IV, Washington, 1924, p. 21.

<sup>6</sup> Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, pp. 94-99. The census operator which is used as a base for these percentages included both owner and tenant regardless of the amount of managerial functions that he might exercise.











Field agents conducting the study state: "In Orleans (Parish) the yearly wage (for laborers--chiefly white) was \$140 to \$200; in other parishes laborers (chiefly Negro) usually take part of the crop when working by the year."<sup>6</sup> These "laborers" would probably be classed as croppers today by the census enumerators. Another agent stated, "Supplies furnished laborers are usually charged against them and deducted from their share of the crop at the end of the year." On the other hand in the description of tenants, the cropper was described as he is today--furnishing only labor and usually getting one-half of the crop. There were other croppers who were boarded by the landlord and received only one-third of the crop as their share. How this latter type of tenant would be classified today is problematical. These data make it appear that local definitions were used in classifying laborers and tenants in the early enumerations rather than the definitions set up by the Census Bureau.

Since the number of farms and the number of operators has been identical (according to the census), the number of farms and other statistics based upon the number of farms as enumerated in 1880 and earlier has a questionable comparability to census materials for the present time. There is no definite knowledge as to when the new interpretations were first used so it would be difficult to try to make a correction.

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<sup>6</sup> Eugene W. Hillard, "Cotton Production in Louisiana", in Report on Cotton Production in the United States, Part I, Tenth Census of the United States, vol. IV, Washington, 1884, pp. 83-84.



In the light of these findings, the percentage of operators who were tenants might also be questionable. The census figures are reduced to positive attributes that were counted, and there is little or no knowledge as to how many more should have been counted and were not.

Several tentative generalizations might be made. Tenancy existed in Louisiana to some extent previous to the Civil War. Following the Civil War, large numbers of Negroes became resident laborers probably receiving a share of the crop as wages. Others became tenants on a share or standing rent basis. The individual changed from tenant to laborer or vice versa from year to year, as he does today. Those who increased in goods, managerial ability, and credit from year to year became farm owners. This made for mobility at two points--between laborers and tenants and between owners and tenants. From 1900 to 1910 the number of laborers of both races increased. Since 1910 the number of white laborers has remained approximately stationary. Negro laborers decreased 48.2 per cent from 1910 to 1930 due largely to cityward migration. In addition, many quite likely became tenants.

White tenants have shown an increase for every census enumeration since 1900 with a 164.4 per cent increase from 1900 to 1925. Negro tenants increased only 22.1 per cent during the same period. Because of this great differential in the rate of increase for white and Negro tenants and laborers, it appears likely that the racial aspects of farm tenancy and farm labor will be less in the future than they have been in the past. The percentage changes for Negro tenants has fluctuated





widely from positive to negative, and the present long time trend might reverse itself or at least be lessened.

Because the same subdivisions of tenants were not used by the census in every enumeration, little can be said about changes in the method of paying rent in Louisiana. The share basis of renting seems to have been the most prevalent in Louisiana for both white and Negro. In three areas near Shreveport, Natchez, Clarksburg, and Baton Rouge the cash and standing renter (chiefly Negro) have declined. This was similar to the situation in Georgia where the Negro standing renter paid for one-third of all tenants in 1920.<sup>9</sup>

Since many people are now concerned with the increase in tenancy, some data in that regard might be of value. As tenancy is related to both ownership and labor, the percentages will be based upon the total number occupied in agriculture rather than the ratio of tenants to owners. Figure 1 indicates the trend from 1880 to 1930 to be an increase in tenancy except for the decade preceding 1910. However, it has increased at the expense of wage and family labor and not at the expense of owner-cultivators every year except the decade from 1920 to 1930. There was some increase in the number of owners from 1920 to 1930 with a 35.2 per cent increase in the number of tenants during the same period. Most of this increase was for white operators and occurred only to a slight extent among the Negroes.

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<sup>9</sup> J. C. Brannen, Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization, U.S.D.A. Department Bulletin 1289, Washington, 1934, p. 14.





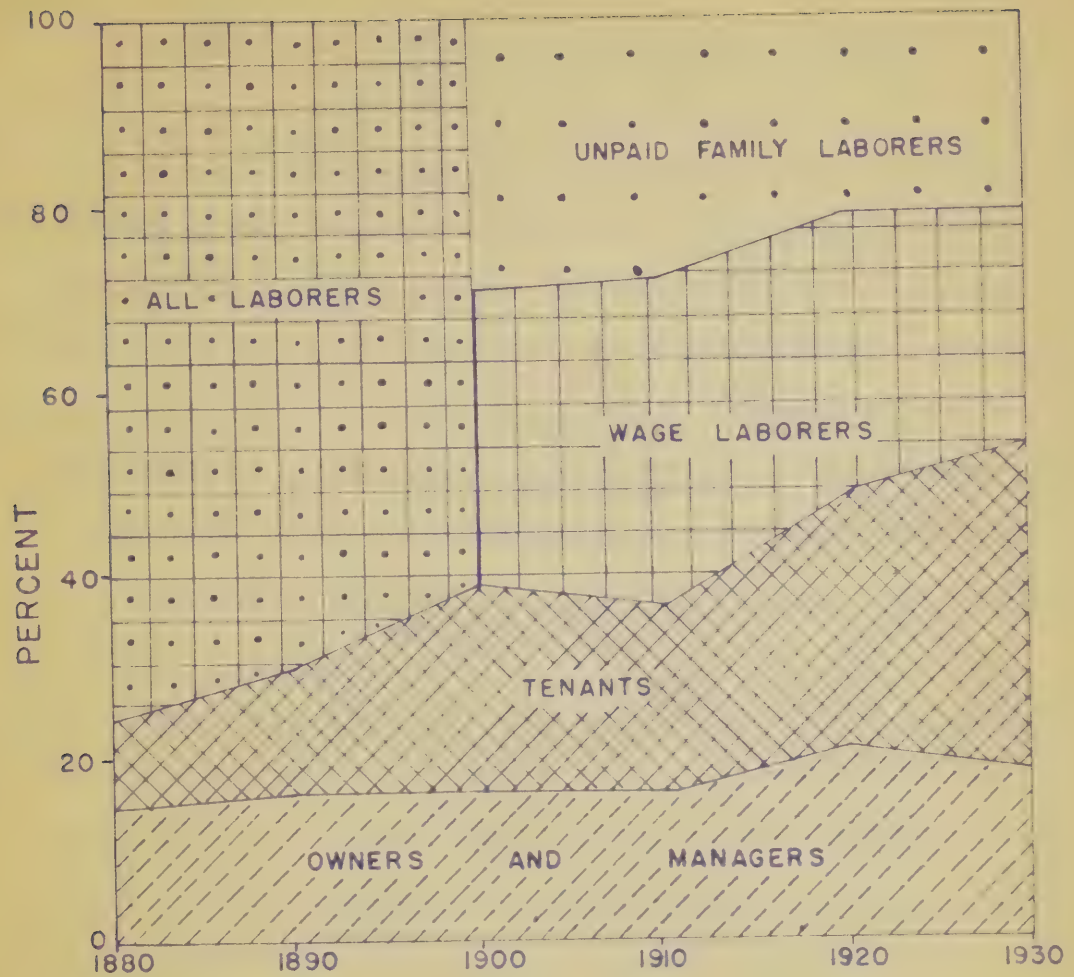


Figure 4 - Trend in Tenure of Agricultural Workers, Louisiana, 1880-1930



### CHAPTER III

#### METHODOLOGY: EXISTING CLASSIFICATIONS OF TENANTS AND THEIR LIMITATIONS

Since all classification is artificial in that it is a synthetic product of man, there is no claim that the divisions herein utilized constitute a "natural" classification. The criteria of any classification depend upon the objectives of the classification. The most logical criteria to be used in a scientific classification are those which will be the most significant in respect to the nature of the phenomena under consideration and those which will most easily enable man to understand the plan of the organization and functioning of the phenomena.<sup>10</sup>

Tenants have been classified in some way by every person who has written concerning them. Some of the classifications have been merely "good and bad" as regards the social and economic situation of the tenants. The United States Bureau of Census has enumerated tenants as share tenants, cash tenants, sharecroppers, share-cash tenants, standing renters, other tenants, and an unclassified group. Each of these groups are further divided into white and colored. The actual classes used differ from one census year to another. Such a classification states merely how the tenant pays his rent. In addition to the mere counting

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<sup>10</sup> Morris R. Cohen and Ernest Nagel, An Introduction to Logic and the Scientific Method, New York, 1934, Chapt. XII.





of the number of tenants, the census presents other descriptive data such as type of farming, size of farm, value of farm, value of buildings, number of years on present farm, etc. The majority of writers have followed the census in classifying tenants. (NA)

The Agricultural Adjustment Administration has set up its own definitions of tenants and farms to suit its purpose. The sharecropper was not included as a tenant. Also the AAA has hinted at tenant classes when it defined a tenant as "...a person other than a sharecropper who rents land from another person (for cash, a fixed commodity payment, or a share of a crop produced thereon or of the proceeds thereof) and is entitled under a written or oral lease or agreement to receive all or a share of a crop produced thereon or of the proceeds thereof, and in the case of rice also means a person furnishing water for a share of the rice."<sup>11</sup> The objective of this definition was to distribute the benefit payments for recommended practices in a just manner. The classification resulting from this definition would appear adequate for that purpose.

Other writers have divided tenants into two classes somewhat similar to those of the AAA--the operating tenants and the non-operating tenants. Some of these writers contend that all non-operating tenants

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<sup>11</sup> Louisiana Handbook, 1940 Agricultural Conservation Program, U.S.D.A., A.S.S., Southern Division, SRE-401-La., Washington, 1940, p. 21.





are merely farm laborers paid in kind.<sup>12</sup> In turn they have been criticized for defining some of the tenants and their problems out of existence. The individuals and their situations still exist no matter what they are named, but they can be analyzed better in their true category.

Other classifications have been based upon several indices. Allred's use of 12 factors to classify tenancy areas in Tennessee is an illustration of this approach.<sup>13</sup> Many but not all of the factors could be used to classify each particular tenant.

Mitchel in studying the tenants on land reclaimed by the Department of Interior and now farmed with the aid of irrigation has made three classes on an entirely different basis.<sup>14</sup> He has stated: "The projects

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<sup>12</sup> See T. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life, New York, 1940, p. 269. Karl Brandt, "Fallacious Census Terminology and Its Consequences in Agriculture", Social Research, 1938, pp. 19-36, also makes some strong points in favor of this interpretation. Also see Ernest J. Holcomb, "The Sharecropper and Wage Laborer in Cotton Production", B.A.E., U.S.E.A. Mimeographed report presented before a subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor, Washington, May, 1940.

<sup>13</sup> C. E. Allred, Types of Tenancy, Rural Research Series, Monograph 73, Knoxville, 1939. Allred's 12 factors were 1) percentage of all farm operators who were tenants, 2) the prevalence of the cash rental system, 3) the prevalence of croppers, 4) the prevalence of part owners, 5) the percentage of operators working off the farm, 6) the percentage of tenants related to their landlord, 7) percentage of land in row crops, 8) the percentage of colored operators, 9) the average net agricultural income per farm, 10) the average value of agricultural products sold, traded, or used at home per farm, 11) the ratio of mortgage debt to the value of the farm, and 12) the average value per farm.

<sup>14</sup> L. H. Mitchel, "Farm Tenancy", Reclamation Era, Vol. 25, Washington, 1935, p. 114.



have three types or classes of tenants: namely, (1) those who move frequently, not necessarily on the same project, but from State to State; (2) those who on account of circumstances over which they have no control, and not having sufficient capital to buy farms, are compelled temporarily to rent; and (3) those who rent as a business undertaking." The first type is further described as professional soil robbers, the second class as young people starting out in the farming business, and the third as a group similar to those tenants to be found in England. This third group are tenants because they think that they can make more money and get more happiness out of life with that form of tenure.

Some studies of tenancy have been concerned only with one class (usually the sharecropper) or have used the census classification of the method of paying rent and all other items are related to tenants classified primarily on that basis. Other studies have described the typical labor organization on plantations or the single family farm. Then they have generalized by saying the usual condition is that tenants are climbing the ladder to ownership or that the tenants are usually sharecroppers with a characteristic pattern of relationships. The cotton plantation sharecropper in the South probably has been described in greater detail than any other group.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See T. J. Wooster, Jr., et al, Landlord and Tenant on the Cotton Plantation, W.P.A., Div. of Social Research, Monograph No. V, Washington, 1938, for a description of the plantation tenant. Other studies with descriptive material on tenants in general and selected predominant classes are E. A. Schuler, Social Status and Farm Tenure--Attitudes and Social Conditions of the Corn Belt and the Cotton Belt Farmers, U.S.D.A., (continued)





The limitations of considering only the method of paying rent are brought out by Holcomb's study of share renting and sharecropping made in 1938 and 1939.<sup>15</sup> Two types of farming subareas were studied in Louisiana with both community and operator schedules taken in Vidalia, Texas, St. Landry, and Claiborne Parishes. All crops grown on the farm were considered with the part furnished by landlord and tenant, and the division of the crop constituting the main features of the schedules. The data were reduced to index numbers with 100 being the usual share paid or received. Some of the cases and communities were only one-half of the usual arrangement with an index number of 55.0 while other cases had index numbers as high as 121.5. This expresses the variation in regard to the strictly economic arrangements of the share rental arrangements. For some of the data there was a tendency for a concentration of cases to occur at the average (the usual arrangement), while for other data there was little or no central tendency. Two different "usual arrangements" were taken for one set of data. These data are presented to show that the terms "share renter" and "sharecropper" have considerable variation as to the amount of the share and actually have only the meaning given to them by definition. Any other characteristics must be proven.

15 (continued)

F.S.A., and B.A.E. cooperating, Social Research Report No. IV, Washington, 1936; Farm Tenancy, Report of the President's Committee, National Resources Committee, Washington, 1937; E. L. Langsford and E. H. Thibodeaux, Plantation Organization and Operation in the Iasco-Mississippi Delta Area, U.S.D.A. Tech. Bull. 692, Washington, 1939; C. O. Brannen, Relation of Land Tenure to Plantation Organization, U.S.D.A. Dept. Bull. 1289, Washington, 1924; R. Schickel and C. A. Woran, Farm Tenure in Iowa, Iowa AES Bulletin 354, Ames, 1937.

16

E. J. Holcomb, Southside Share Renting and Sharecropping Arrangements Study, unpublished data collected in 1938-1939, U.S.D.A. and State Agricultural Experiment Stations cooperating.



#### CHAPTER IV

##### METHODOLOGY: SAMPLING AND SOURCE OF DATA

Some knowledge is always available to indicate the limits of possibilities and the places where detailed information is desirable. In regard to tenancy in Louisiana secondary data from the United States Bureau of Census, type-of-farming studies, population studies, and other State and national studies dealing with farm labor organization are available on a Statewide basis.<sup>17</sup> Since the frame of reference and the definitions for this study differ from those of other studies, the data from secondary sources cannot be used in their entirety. Another difficulty is that the secondary data apply to different years, and some of the enumerations were made as much as 20 years ago. Where recent data were unavailable, the amount of change was estimated. At any rate, definite situations have occurred in particular areas, and those areas have gone through that period in their history.

Primary data, based upon the definitions as given in Chapter VI, were collected in 1959 and 1960. Two-page questionnaires were mailed to a sample of the landlords and tenants in the State.<sup>18</sup> Specific landlord-tenant relationships are noted in the answers to the limited number of

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<sup>17</sup> These studies are given more detailed attention in considering the factors associated with tenancy. (Chapter V).

<sup>18</sup> See Appendix B, p.        for sample of questionnaires and instructions for editing. (Appendix B of the thesis was omitted from this reproduction.)





questions in the questionnaires. In addition, data based upon records and estimates were secured from agricultural technicians in each of the parishes of the State. This latter information was of a more general nature and represented the predominant situation over a wide territory, sometimes the entire parish if the parish was reasonably homogeneous for the factors under consideration.

It was originally planned to send 6,000 questionnaires to landlords and an additional 5,000 to tenants by selecting a mailing list from the 1937 LSA records of applications for compliance in the crop control program. The number of questionnaires to be sent each parish was allotted according to the percentage of the total number of tenants in the State, using the figures in the 1935 Agricultural Census. The number allotted each parish was equally divided among the wards of which it was composed, with a minimum of five for each ward. Tenancy was identified where two or more persons were listed to receive payment for compliance on one farm. The sample tenancy situations were selected as the names appeared in the record, there being no particular order of the names. If there was an average of three tenants per farm for a particular ward, every third tenant's name was selected.

In utilizing this plan to secure 10,000 names, it was found that 4 parishes and 61 wards in 18 other parishes had no farms listed or had no cooperators with tenants in 1937. Likewise many wards had an insufficient number of names. The result was that 4,660 landlord and 5,099 tenant questionnaires were mailed. In 24 parishes tenants and landlords on the same farm were selected and the mailing list was keyed so that these



parishes could be identified. For the other 36 parishes the tenants and landlords sampled lived on different farms although in some cases two or more tenants lived on the same farm.

Figure 2 indicates the distribution of the relevant questionnaires that were returned. There were 591 (14.3 per cent) of the landlord and 312 (26.3 per cent) of the tenant questionnaires returned with sufficient information for use.<sup>19</sup> Some publicity was given the study in the local country papers throughout the State with the aid of the Agricultural Extension Service News, and this publicity probably had some effect upon both the quantity and the accuracy of the returns. Of the total number of questionnaires mailed, slightly less than 2 per cent of the landlord and slightly over 10 per cent of the tenant questionnaires were returned unopened. The reasons indicated by the postmasters were usually "not known" and "unclaimed." Death accounted for a few of the unclaimed letters. However, differential migration alone is probably sufficient explanation of the difference in the percentages.

Although the sample is generally representative of all the tenants of Louisiana, it has several limitations. First, the AAA records are weighted for cotton and sugar cane farming. This is significant in that a higher percentage of the total cotton and sugar cane farmers were operators in the AAA program than for other types of farming. Landlords

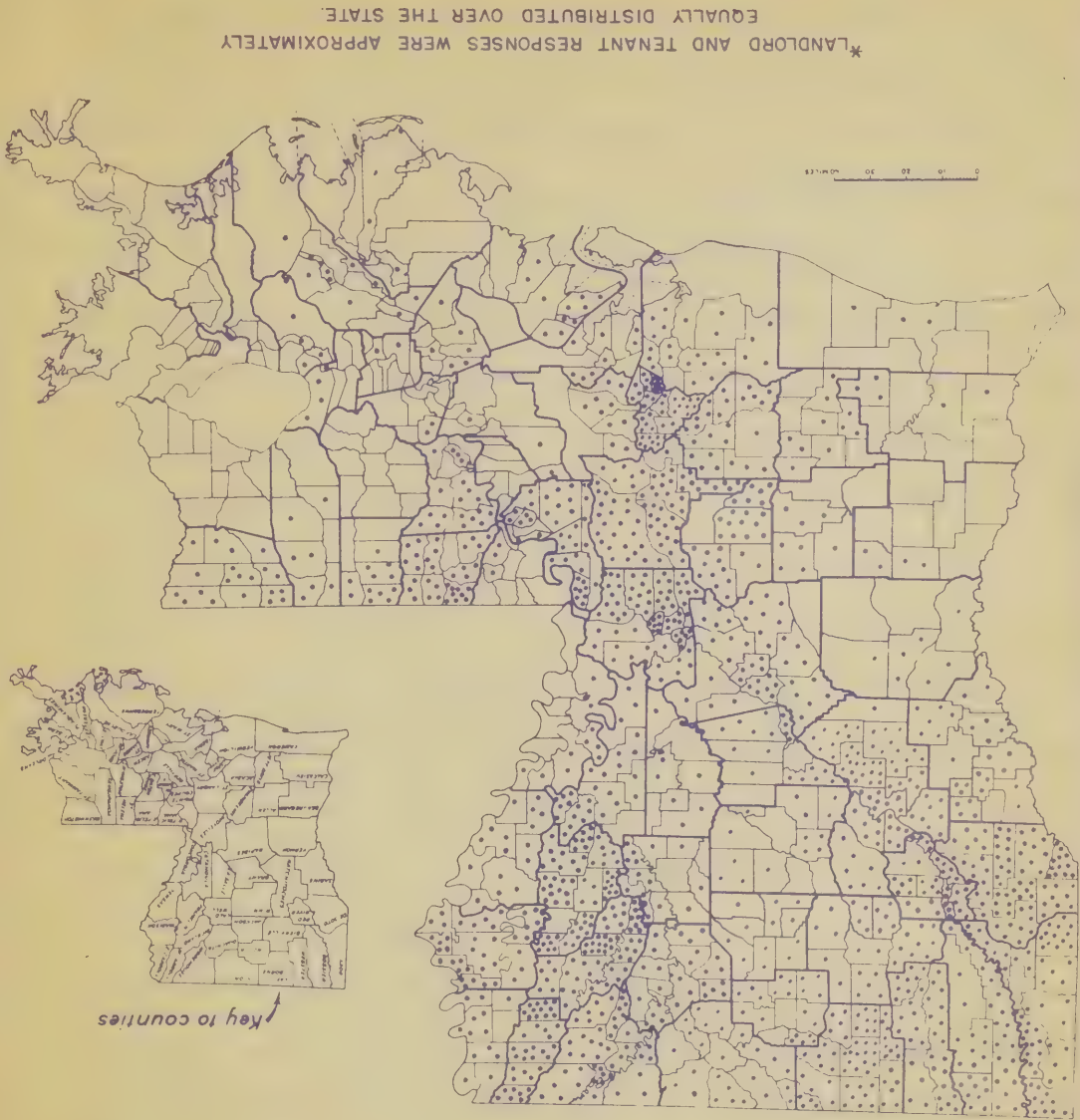
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<sup>19</sup> The number of questionnaires returned unopened was subtracted from the total number mailed in calculating this percentage so that those persons who were not exposed to the questionnaires were not included in the percentages.





Figure 2 — LOCATION OF RESIDENCE OF 591 LANDLORDS  
AND 918 TENANTS WHO RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES IN  
LOUISIANA TYPE OF TENANCY AREA STUDY, 1939\*





with only cash tenants or standing renters in 1937 were not always listed, as the owners in such cases did not receive an AAA payment. However, 5.4 per cent of the tenants reported paying a cash rent which was only one-half of the 12.2 per cent reported by the census for 1930. By dividing the number of names allotted to each parish equally among the wards and establishing a minimum number per ward, the wards with a few tenants were over represented so far as number of tenants were concerned. On the other hand this was thought desirable from the standpoint of area representation.

Certain selectivity also doubtless occurred in those who answered the questionnaires. Illiterate persons<sup>20</sup> probably did not answer to as great an extent as those who could read and write. However, several illiterate persons did return the questionnaires as indicated by those signed with an "x" and witnessed by other parties. Others may have been written by children, wives or other people. In a few other cases it was rather obvious that the landlord had assisted in filling out the questionnaires. The more migratory tenants and landlords (those moving between 1937 and 1939) were missed as was indicated by the letters being returned unopened. Judging from the comments made, the tenants answering appeared to be those who desired an improvement in living conditions in general while the landlords were those who were more cooperative with governmental action programs. In other words, the tenants in the worse situations and

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<sup>20</sup> The Census in 1930 reported 38.0 per cent of the rural-farm Negro males 21 years and older of Louisiana to be illiterate as contrasted with 9.0 per cent of the native white males. The females and those under 21 years of age were less illiterate in all cases.





and the landlords representing the better situations answered the request for information. The comments of the person answering the questionnaire were helpful in ascertaining the real meaning of the answers. It is likely that the landlord was more familiar with the terms used and made a better interpretation of the questions. To summarize, the situations are not entirely representative of all tenant situations in numbers but do represent a great many situations that vary to a considerable extent in regard to the characteristics that were studied.

An analysis of the answers given by 51 pairs of landlords and tenants on the same farm shows considerable variation. Tables I and II show the amount of variation between landlord and tenant and between tenants living on the same farm for selected items that should be in reasonable agreement. The statements in regard to the amount of supervision showed the greatest disparity. This might be partially explained by the landlord thinking that he was supervising by his mere presence, while the tenant did not consider all visits as being supervisory. There was also considerable variation in the statements as to the amount of credit and furnish received from the landlord. As considerable variation also occurred between the 33 pairs of tenants on the same farm, a general explanation is that the answers represented different situations as each tenant reported a particular situation while the owner had answered concerning the usual arrangement. The data from all of the questionnaires were placed on punch cards to facilitate analysis.

The schedules from the agricultural technicians, who consisted of the County Agricultural Agent, the AAA Administrative Assistant, and the









TABLE II

DIFFERENCES IN SUPERVISED, PARTIALLY SUPERVISED, AND  
INDEPENDENT TENANTS IN LOUISIANA<sup>1</sup>

	Independent		Partially Supervised		Completely Supervised		Total
	Number	Per Cent of Those Reporting	Number	Per Cent of Those Reporting	Number	Per Cent of Those Reporting	Number
Number of tenants	156		207		80		443
Croppers	25	16.2	98	50.3	62	83.8	185
Colored	74	48.1	136	66.7	67	85.7	279
Related to landlord	25	16.2	26	13.4	2	2.8	53
Written lease	39	26.9	27	15.4	11	19.3	77
Rent all of farm	75	49.3	57	28.8	11	14.7	143
Over 10 families on farm <sup>a</sup>	5	3.3	24	12.1	17	22.7	46
Wage labor for landlord	18	11.6	53	66.9	53	71.6	124
On relief	36	23.8	66	31.5	25	31.6	127
Received gifts from landlord	37	25.8	46	23.0	15	20.8	99
With gardens	145	93.5	192	93.4	71	88.7	408
Under 35 years of age	82	81.2	62	30.3	34	42.5	125
Over 35 years of age	56	23.9	45	23.3	14	17.6	90
Paying cash or standing rent	26	17.0	17	8.2	1	1.4	44
Paying 1/2 share rent	24	15.7	102	54.0	35	74.5	161
Paying share other than 1/2	102	66.7	73	37.1	15	21.1	197
Number of landlords	66		125		150		343
Colored	13	20.0	35	28.2	23	15.4	71
Under 35 years of age	4	7.0	9	7.7	17	11.8	30
Over 35 years of age	54	59.6	71	60.2	74	51.4	179
Over 10 years as owner	45	90.2	106	80.9	132	91.7	283

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 53 and 57 for explanation of terms. The number indicates those reporting "yes" for that particular characteristic. The percentage refers to the part that number is of the total number of that type of tenants who reported.



Rural Resettlement Supervisors were taken by personal interview.<sup>21</sup> In a few cases other technicians such as Soil Conservation Employees, Agricultural Experiment Station workers, Vocational Agricultural teachers and various district agents were also interviewed. Where a man had been on the job for less than six months, no interview was taken. Each technician was asked to delineate the areas in his parish on the basis of "systems of farming". Each area was then described in terms of the estimated percentage of farm families that fell in each system. The characteristics used for the description were: (1) size of farm based upon the number of farm families per farm, (2) type of farming, (3) tenure of the person (head of family) performing the labor on the farm, (4) the social relationship between landlord and laborer or tenant, (5) type of ownership, (6) race relationships between tenure groups, and (7) sub-leasing and the relationship of the middleman to both of the others. The usual categories for each characteristic are indicated on the key. The customary share of rent, the degree of mechanization, the displacement of tenants, the assignment of AAA benefit payments, the intensity of relief, the Rural Electrification program, Soil Conservation, farm mortgages, the development of new agricultural land, methods for improving the landlord-tenant relations and other subjects were discussed as they pertained to tenancy and land tenure.

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<sup>21</sup> See Appendix E, p. 88-91 for sample of schedule forms and instructions to enumerator. (Appendix B of the thesis was omitted from this reproduction.)





The three technician schedules for each parish were assigned to make one composite map and description. The data were weighted so that the more complete and detailed map and description was given the greatest significance. The technician with the greatest amount of experience and familiarity with the local situation was followed more closely than the others. Where disagreement occurred, the technicians were interviewed again to secure a greater degree of harmony. As each habitually dealt with different groups of farm people the three had different viewpoints, but for the most part they were in agreement. By mapping the resulting areas on a State map and comparing the descriptions for each area, a number of the areas were combined, resulting in a relatively few areas.

Informal interviews were held with representatives of the National Forest Service, the United States Biological Survey, the State Soil Conservation Service, Farm Security project managers, and the State Department of Conservation. In both these and the technician interviews an attempt was made to secure the greatest amount of opinions and suggestions in regard to as many aspects of tenancy and tenure as possible.

In this way three or more sets of data were tied to specific areas, providing a check on all data--secondary source material, questionnaires, and the technician descriptions. The procedure for this multiple checking was to begin with the technician maps and descriptions. Census data plotted on maps was interpreted in the light of the difference in years and definitions. The data from questionnaires were allotted to the areas which they represented and added to the description. Other localized studies germane to tenancy were studied to intensify and correct both the



areas and the descriptions of those areas.<sup>22</sup>

## CHAPTER V

### FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH TENANCY

There are a great many factors associated with tenancy, and the subject can be developed to a much greater extent than is done here. The factors presented in this chapter are chiefly descriptive and are not used to classify tenancy situations. Many of the factors such as type-of-farming are non-tenancy and can exist with or without the phenomena of tenancy. Others such as written leases, relation of tenant to landlord, and method of paying rent are tenancy factors but exist in varied types of situations and of themselves are descriptive only of the conditions included in their definition. Still other factors such as race and age are not exclusively agricultural factors. Nevertheless, these factors do provide limits for the farm operations that permit tenancy to exist. The idea of permission and limitation is emphasized rather than any idea of classifying tenants or tenancy areas on the basis of those factors.

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<sup>22</sup> These localized studies were: H. C. Hoffsommer, The Sugar Cane Farm, Louisiana AES Bulletin in the process of publication, Baton Rouge, 1940; S. Earl Grigsby, The Social and Economic Aspects of Negro Farm Labor on Large Cotton Plantations, Concordia Parish, Louisiana, unpublished thesis, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, 1937. Supervisor's reports of Red River Parish from E. A. Schuler, Social Status and Farm Tenure--Attitudes and Social Conditions of Corn Belt and Cotton Belt Farmers, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, U.S.D.A., Social Research Report IV, Washington, 1938; Unpublished studies of AAA data for Red River, Lincoln, Beauregard, East Feliciana, East Carroll, West Carroll, Washington and Claiborne Parishes.





### Population

the population of Louisiana is unevenly distributed with the large metropolis of New Orleans and several cities of lesser magnitude such as Baton Rouge, Shreveport, Monroe, Lake Charles, and Alexandria making up over one-third of the population of the State in 1930. The existence of these aggregates of people cause differences in the value and use of land, and their influence is felt to a diminishing degree in more or less concentric circles which overlap with like circles of influence from other aggregates of people.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to those living in cities there are people other than farmers scattered throughout the State. The rural non-farm population is a measure of these people. Some of them provide services for the farm population, but many others work at non-farm, non-service occupations. In any event, like city dwellers they depend upon the farmers to a large extent for fresh, perishable foods. Rural industries such as lumbering, or work in sugar mills provide an opportunity for farmers to work for a daily wage during the slack season although such employment is obviously restricted by the location and character of these rural industries. In some areas non-farm work is an important means for getting sufficient capital to operate or purchase a farm. The presence of urban and rural non-farm population also affects the method of paying rent, the racial composition of the population and the landlord-tenant relations in general.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> For a further elaboration of this principle see the discussion of von Thunen's "Isolated State" in R. T. Ely and C. S. Wehrwein, Land Economics, Ann Arbor, 1931, p. 45-48.

<sup>24</sup> A more detailed description of those areas with non-farm people is given in the following chapter.



### Race and Nativity

It is usually agreed that two races living together in the same area will result in tenancy of the use of wage labor. When nationality is included with the characteristic of race, the generalization still appears to be true. In many countries, such as Mexico (all foreigners) and the United States (Orientals), foreigners are prohibited by law from becoming owners of landed property. If these people are farmers, they can be only tenants or laborers. As most of the later immigrants to America have had neither the capital nor credit to purchase land, the usual procedure of those desiring to become farmers has been to work in cities long enough to accumulate sufficient capital to purchase land. The European immigrant highly desires the ownership of land and will give up such "luxuries" as electricity, automobiles, clothes, good housing, amusements, etc., which are used in determining the standard of living. Those of foreign birth are numerically unimportant in Louisiana there being only 0.5 per cent of the rural-farm population classed as foreign born white in 1930 and only 0.6 per cent classed as native white of foreign or mixed parentage.

The environmental conditioning of the European immigrant can be contrasted to the slavery background of the Negro. As a group the Negroes have had little experience with land ownership or managerial responsibility and therefore lack the burning desire for ownership that exists in the European immigrant, although they claim to want to be owners. Souder found that a higher percentage of the Southern Negro desired ownership than the Northern tenants but fewer of them expected





to achieve ownership.<sup>25</sup> Also a very high percentage wanted governmental aid both in finding a farm and in operating it after the purchase. Those tenants related to the landlord desired ownership less than other non-owners. Perhaps if the Negroes were more familiar with the trials of ownership, fewer of them would say they thought ownership desirable. When the lack of economic goods, educational training, and political representation are added to the lack of training in responsibility and the desire for ownership, the picture is complete as to why the Negroes have achieved ownership so slowly. There have been other charges made such as oppression by the whites and asking the Negro purchaser a higher price for land than was asked white buyers.<sup>26</sup>

### Age

Age is a fundamental factor concerning the tenure of the agricultural worker which has been expressed in a dramatic way by the use of the term "agricultural ladder."<sup>27</sup> The idea in the early twenties, developed largely in the Middle West, was that a young farmer achieved ownership through the steps of unpaid family laborer, wage laborer, tenant, owner

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<sup>25</sup> F. A. Schuler, op. cit. pp. 64-73. The areas studied in Louisiana were located in the delta of Red River Parish.

<sup>26</sup> C. S. Johnson, Shadow of the Plantation, Chicago, 1934; Arthur Raper, Preface to Peasantry, Chapel Hill, 1936.

<sup>27</sup> See J. O. Rankin, Steps to Nebraska Farm Ownership, Nebraska AES Bulletin 210, Lincoln, 1936. H. H. Hibbard and G. A. Peterson, How Wisconsin Farmers Became Farm Owners, Wisconsin AES Bulletin 402, Madison, 1928. E. A. Goldenweizer and W. J. Spillan, "The Agricultural Ladder", United States Agricultural Yearbook, 1916, Washington, 1916, pp. 321-346.



of a mortgaged farm and finally complete ownership. Later studies such as that of Schultz in Iowa indicate that ownership is being achieved much more slowly than before and, in many cases, not at all.<sup>28</sup> Williams has analyzed 2,000 case histories in South Carolina and has reached the conclusion that the agricultural ladder works for the sons of farm owners but not for the sons of tenants and laborers.<sup>29</sup> Figures 3 and 4 show that these steps to ownership do exist in Louisiana, but wage labor continues to death in many cases, and the Negroes achieve ownership much more slowly than the whites. Williams has also advanced the proposition that age and size of family are definite reasons for tenants (and owners) moving.<sup>30</sup> As there are more young people of a working age in the family, the operator has the need for a larger and larger farm. As the young people leave the farm, the operator desires a farm of less size. The changes involved in the life cycle of a farm family are of great importance in determining the proper size of farm to accommodate a farm family.

#### Land Use

The physiographic features are important in determining the use made of land although they are not the only factors to be considered.

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<sup>28</sup> Theodore W. Schultz, "What has Happened to the Agricultural Ladder", Farm Tenure in Iowa, Part III, Iowa AES Bulletin 557, Ames, 1957.

<sup>29</sup> E. O. Williams, "Mobility and Farm Tenancy", Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics, Vol. XIV (1938), p. 207.

<sup>30</sup> E. O. Williams, "South Carolina Under the Microscope" an illustrated lecture delivered at Louisiana State University, Summer Session, 1939.





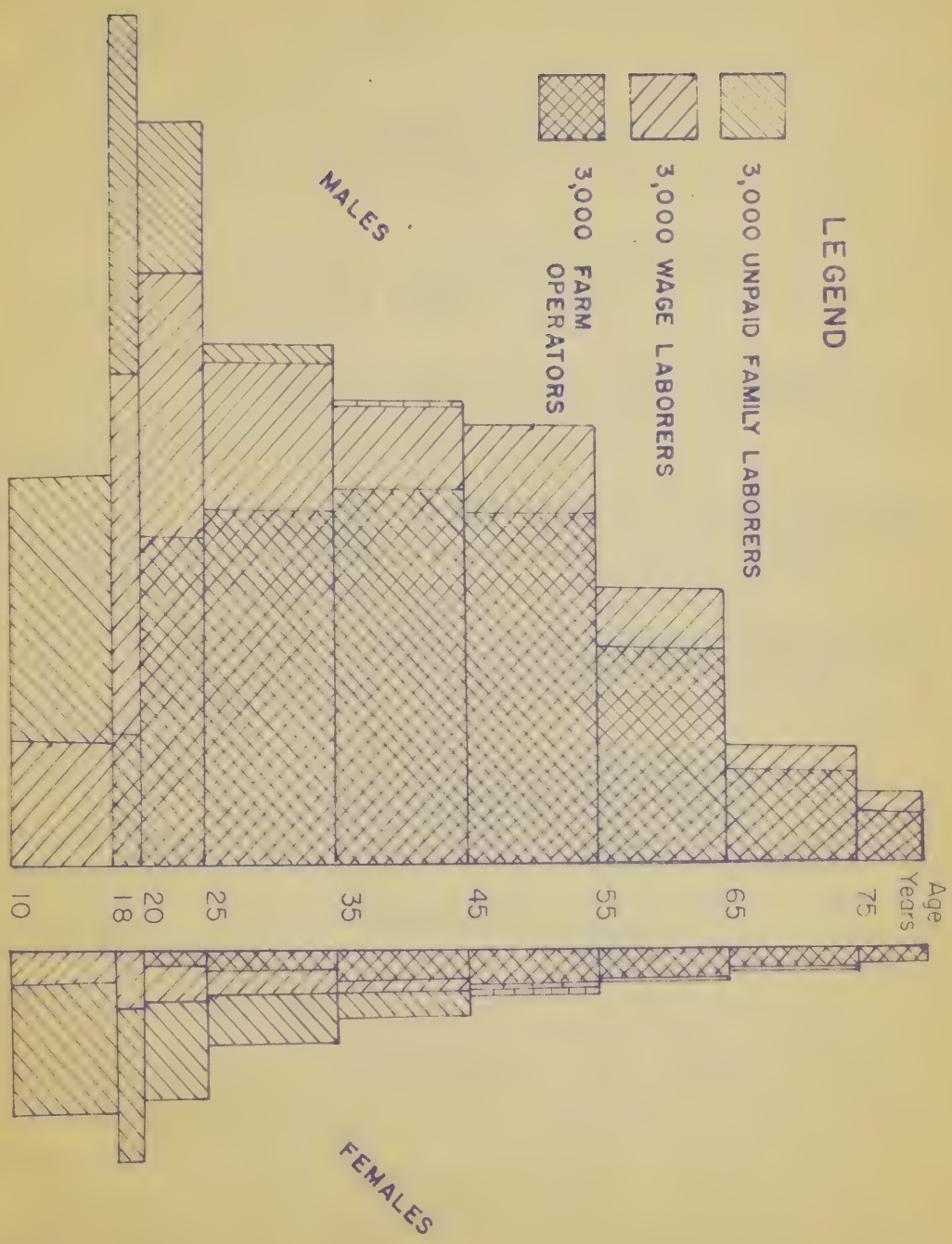


Figure 3 — Sex and Age Distribution of Farm Operators, Wage Laborers, and Unpaid Family Workers Employed in Agriculture, Louisiana, 1930



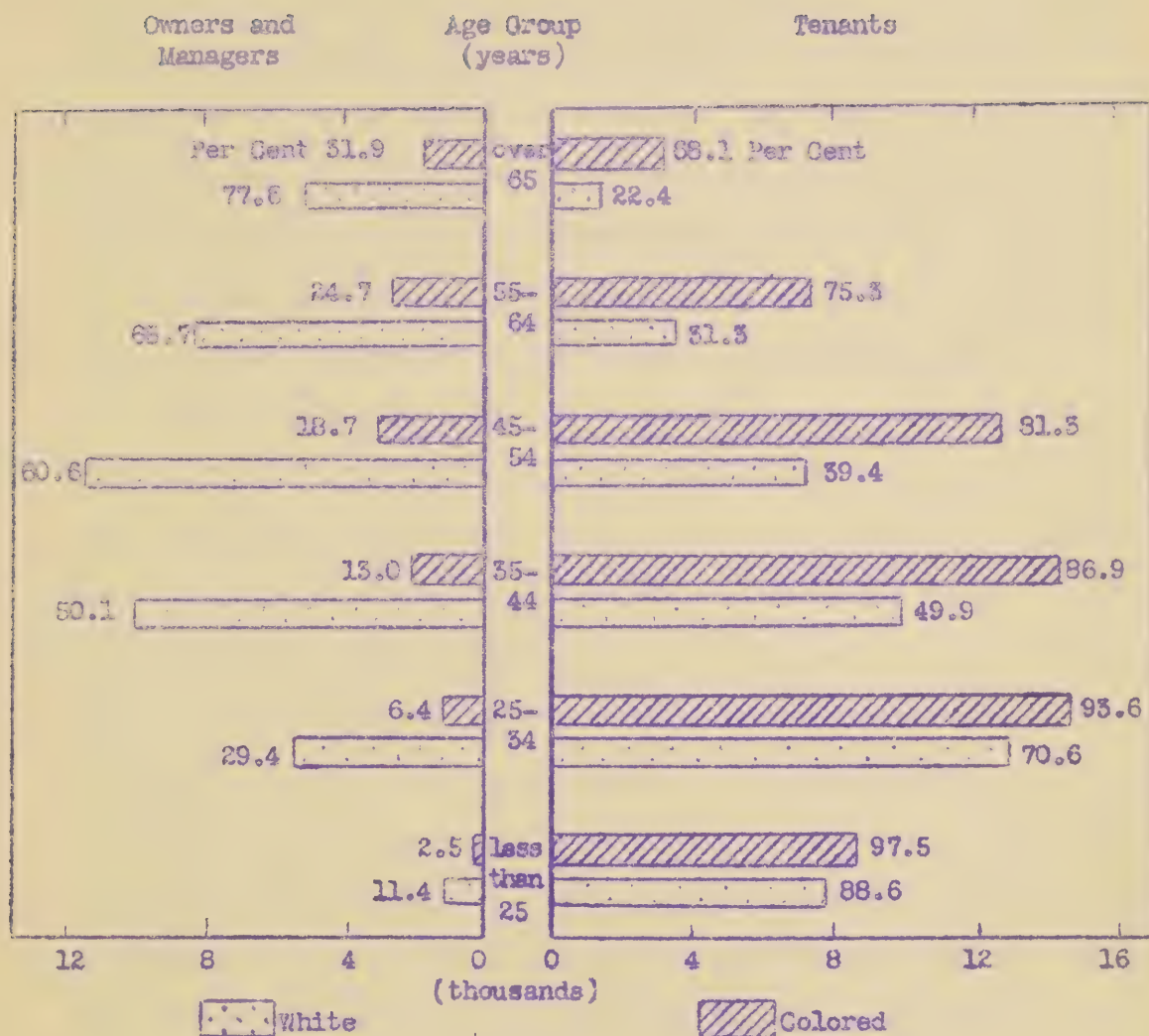


Figure 4. Number of Owners and Tenants in each age Group by Race in Louisiana, 1930\*

\* Fifteenth Census of the United States, "Agriculture", Vol. III, Washington, 1932, p. 335.





Rainfall is not a limiting factor for any crop in one part of Louisiana more than in another part. The length of growing season limits sugar cane to the southern part of the State and citrus fruits are limited to Plaquemines Parish for growth in commercial quantities. Questions of soil origins, drainage, degree of erosion, and general productivity as measured by the percentage of land in farms, the percentage of farm land in crops, and the value of land per acre are of greater diversity within the State than climate and therefore are of greater importance.

Without going into the technicalities of soil classification, a very generalized soil description might be of benefit. The delta along both sides of the Red River is alluvial soil with adequate drainage in most cases for good agricultural production. The Upper Mississippi Delta is also alluvial soil of high quality but in places is subject to overflow, and drainage is very difficult and expensive in many cases. With the improved conditions of water control in the upper Mississippi system, there is less danger from overflow except for the southern part of Concordia Parish where there is no levee at the junction of the Red and the Mississippi Rivers. Much of the land not used for farming in the Mississippi Delta is in second growth timber and undergrowth or is covered with water for a good part of the year. In what is known as the Upland Cotton area the top soil is rather thin and is subject to serious erosion.<sup>51</sup> The loose soils of the Pelicianas are productive only when

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<sup>51</sup> The classification of the State into type-of-farming areas is as follows, which is the same as is given by T. Lynn Smith, The Growth of Population in Louisiana 1890 to 1930, Louisiana AES Bulletin 264, (continued)



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treated with fertilizers. Those parishes where fruit and vegetables are grown have sandy soils that respond to fertilizer treatment but are normally poor soils. For about thirty miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico the soil is tidal marsh--a soil of excellent quality but too low for good drainage. A very slight increase in elevation is known as an island such as Pecan Islands in Vermillion Parish, and gives good returns for agricultural use. By throwing up a dike and pumping the water from the enclosed land new agricultural land can be brought into production. This has been done at Cut Off in Lafourche Parish with yields obtained of over 700 pounds of cotton per acre. This work is expensive and can be done only by owners with considerable capital. The tenure system following drainage has been tenancy.

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31 (Continued)  
Baton Rouge, 1935, pp. 4-5:

Upland Cotton: Beauregard, Bienville, Caldwell, Cameron, DeSoto, East Baton Rouge, East Feliciana, Evangeline, Grant, Jackson, Lafayette, LaSalle, Lincoln, Ouachita, Sabine, St. Helena, Union, St. Landry, Vernon, Washington, Webster, West Feliciana and Winn Parishes.

Delta Cotton: Avoyelles, Bossier, Caddo, Catahoula, Concordia, East Carroll, Franklin, Madison, Natchitoches, Pointe Coupee, Rapides, Red River, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll Parishes.

Rice: Acadia, Allen, Calcasieu, Jeff Davis, and Vermillion Parishes.

Cane: Ascension, Assumption, Iberia, Iberville, Lafourche, St. James, St. John the Baptist, St. Martin, St. Mary, Terrebonne, and West Baton Rouge Parishes.

Small Fruit and Vegetables: Jefferson, Livingston, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. Tammany, and Tangipahoa Parishes.





The productivity of farm land can be measured by the intensity of use although the actual income derived from the use is omitted from consideration. It is a measure of the number of people supported by the land but not a measure of the style in which they are supported. The density of the farm population, the percentage of land in farms, the percentage of farm land in crops, and to some extent the value of farm land per acre show that land is used most intensively in Lafayette Parish and the surrounding areas. Next are the sugar areas and then the Red and Mississippi deltas. The ward averages for 1965 upon which these generalizations were made are not entirely descriptive of the real situation. In the Mississippi delta and in the sugar areas there was considerable waste land included in what the census counted as total land in farms, while the cultivated land is used very intensively with the people living close together along streams or roads. That a high rate of tenancy is found on high priced land is illustrated by the situation in Louisiana. Ignoring the extremely high priced lands near New Orleans, Shreveport, and Alexandria because of their location, the farm land with the highest value per acre is located in the delta cotton areas, the sugar bowl (not tenancy, but labor) and the area surrounding Lafayette Parish. The Felicianas, Claiborne, Webster, and Bienville Parishes have high tenancy but only an average to low value of land.

#### Type of Farming

In 1930 the census reported 78.3 per cent of the farms in Louisiana as cotton farms with the operators receiving over 40 per cent of their



income from cotton. General farming, rice, sugar cane, fruit and self-sufficient farming made up about 4 per cent each making a total of about 19 per cent. The remaining 4 per cent were truck, dairy, animal specialty, stock ranch and poultry. The census further reported that 76 per cent of the cotton farms were operated by tenants, 53 per cent of the sugar cane farms, 50 per cent of the rice farms, and lesser percentages for the minor types. Animal-specialty farms was lowest with only 12 per cent of the farms being operated by tenants. Assumption and St. Mary Parishes in the heart of the sugar bowl reported the average tenant's farm in 1935 to be over 200 acres in size and with a value of over \$6,000. This differs considerably from the average 20 to 30 acre farms in the delta cotton areas with average values of less than \$1,200. (The high value of the cultivated land which constitutes the tenant's farm in this area accounts for the relatively high value per acre.) Doubtless the fact of a high rate of tenancy on cash crop farms can be explained in terms of labor needs, risk, investment, and the degree of mechanization most economical for the production of the crop, but in these considerations the possibility of the use of wage labor or the size of holdings being family sized are overlooked. Labor can be used under any kind of conditions. Likewise the family farm operated by the owner on a live-at-home basis can stand the rigors of low farm prices, diseases of the main cash crop to a better extent than the single crop system. This latter situation borders on general farming.





### Labor Organization

The type of farming and the size of holding that is customary and thought to be most economical for an area are of great importance in determining the type of labor organization. With the large holdings and the sentiment attached to keeping them as such in the plantation areas of the South, it would be difficult to create family-sized owner-operated farms. The relationship between the white owner and the traditional colored cropper cannot be eliminated without serious readjustment for both that might be disastrous except by a gradual change over a very long period of time. On these plantations there are large continuous areas of productive land, while the poorer lands are at a distance on the "back side" of the plantation. The plantation as a unit can be diversified but to do so with each tenant farm would be very difficult without divided holdings. With the increase in mechanization, the larger plantations are more adaptable to the increase in investment necessary for the purchase of large equipment units. A few of the plantations have purchased large mechanized units with no change in the organization of the plantation although economically better results can be obtained with the use of wage labor, at least for the operation of the machine.

Sugar production has been developed by large corporations with the maximum amount of mechanization. Whatever the reason, resident laborers (83 per cent of the workers) rather than tenants (14 per cent of the workers) have become the predominant organization for producing sugar cane. There are a great many small farmers with commercial cane, but Hoffmann has reported that 2 per cent of the operators with 80 acres or



more of cane produced 80 per cent of the total crop in the sugar bowl.<sup>32</sup>

### Ownership

Some very obvious situations in regard to ownership will result in tenancy or the use of labor. If the owner of a farm is anyone other than an individual or partnership, if the owner does not live on the farm close by, if the owner is too old to do all of the work and has no family to do the work for him, or if the farm is too large to be worked by the owner and his family, there is no other possibility than the use of laborers or the renting of part or all of the farm. This assumes that the farm is being used since the owner of a farm usually desires some income in addition to the "satisfactions" of paying taxes, interest, insurance, cost of upkeep and the social status resulting from farm ownership. The owner living on a large farm and supervising the tenants results in a different type of tenant from that on a family sized farm owned by an absentee owner.

### Size of Holdings

The concentration of ownership is a permissive factor affecting tenancy but the characteristic is difficult to measure with the existing data. To measure the size of farm in terms of the number of families living on the farm is a very desirable criteria for the frame of reference used in this study.<sup>33</sup> Other measures are the total number of acres per

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<sup>32</sup> E. C. Hoffsommer, The Sugar Cane Farm, Louisiana AES Bulletin 320, Baton Rouge, 1940.

<sup>33</sup> T. Lynn Smith, The Sociology of Rural Life, New York, 1940, p. 293. Dr. Smith has classified farms by size into (1) subsistence homesteads, (2) family farms, and (3) large holdings. Chapter XIII is devoted to a description of limitations of the three classes.





area, the number of acres of cultivated land per farm, and the value of the farm which represents fixed capital. These latter measures do not allow for the type of farming, the degree of mechanization, or the intensity of production. The records of the Louisiana Tax Commission indicate the total acreage owned by one taxpayer, but the census data is based upon the "operator's" farm and not the owner's farm except for special enumeration in 1900, 1910 and 1920.

The Agricultural Census of 1900 and of 1920 included some questions concerning the size of the owner's farm.<sup>54</sup> The 1900 data were based on State averages while in 1920 only selected areas in certain States were studied. The parishes used in 1920 for Louisiana were Acadia, Allen, Evangeline and Jeff Davis. As these parishes did not have a particularly high rate of tenancy, the Yazoo Delta of Mississippi and the Black Belt of Mississippi and Alabama are used to represent the delta lands of Louisiana.

In 1900 owners of tenant farms averaged 2.06 tenants per farm in Louisiana, 2.27 tenants in Alabama, and 2.42 tenants per farm in Mississippi. These figures can be compared with an average of 1.54 for the United States. The 1920 data based on the sample areas as stated showed the average number of tenants per farm was 1.77 in Louisiana, 6.71 in Mississippi, and 4.46 in Alabama. A measure of the intensity of the large holdings is shown by the percentage of landlords with three or more tenants.

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<sup>54</sup> H. A. Turner, The Ownership of Tenant Farms in the United States, U.S.D.A. Dept. Bull. 1432, Washington, 1926.



in 1920 Louisiana had 18.7 per cent of the landlords in that category which represented 44.6 per cent of the tenants of the area, and Mississippi had 38.6 per cent of the landlords which represented 38.9 per cent of the tenants within the area.<sup>35</sup>

The plantation study of 1910 enumerated 2,480 plantations in Louisiana representing 19,654 tenants when plantations were defined as having five or more tenants per farm. These plantations were located in the delta areas and their border territory and represented 43.9 per cent of all the farms in the parishes used in the study.<sup>36</sup> Labor plantations were identified where over \$1,000 was expended for labor per year. In 1910 there were 2,030 farms in this category, and most of them were in the sugar belt.<sup>37</sup> Data from the 1925 Agricultural Census showed the labor plantations to be in the same area. Although other States such as California had a larger percentage of farms in the labor plantation class, Louisiana had the highest average amount (\$5,864) expended for labor for those farms reporting such expenditures.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid, pp. 16-17.

<sup>36</sup> Plantation Farming in the United States, U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Washington, 1915, p. 26.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 33.

<sup>38</sup> J. C. Folsom and O. E. Baker, A Graphic Summary of Farm Labor and Population, U.S.D.A. Misc. Publication 265, Washington, 1937, p. 14 and p. 16.





The agricultural technicians have stated that there has been little change in the size of farms insofar as acreage is concerned. Mechanization and improved methods of farming have displaced some tenants and laborers, although this actual displacement has been less than a strict economic system might demand. On some tenant plantations the tenants have become wage laborers, or the tractors have replaced the mule with no change in organization. On labor plantations the laborers get less work per year with little difference in the number of families per farm. Mechanization makes displacement permissible but not mandatory. Hamilton has estimated the extent to which families might be displaced by tractors.<sup>89</sup>

Anker has made a study of large holdings from the tax records that is indicative of the extent of large holdings in Agriculture on a parish basis.<sup>90</sup> Some of the data are incomplete because of the condition of the records and other technical difficulties, but the results are an indication of the extent and distribution of large agricultural holdings in the State by parishes. (Figure 5) Large holdings were defined in terms of acres in farms, with 1,250 acres being the lower limit. Farm land consisted only of land in crops and pastures. This differs from the census definition of land in farms which also includes woodland and waste land

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<sup>89</sup> O. Horace Hamilton, "Steel Mules", Land Policy Review, Vol. II, No. 2 (1939) Washington, 1939.

<sup>90</sup> B. W. L. Anker, unpublished data from a study of large holdings in Louisiana based upon the 1935 tax records, 1939-1940.



Figure 5 — PERCENTAGE OF FARM LAND IN HOLDINGS OVER 1250 ACRES IN LOUISIANA, 1935\*

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\*ADAPTED FROM DI WANKER'S 'UNPUBLISHED DATA'





not in use. The parishes with large percentage of the farm land in large holdings were those in the delta cotton and sugar areas, Calcasieu and Cameron Parishes. The tenure organization in these three areas differs in the different types of farming. The cotton plantations use chiefly tenants, the sugar plantations use resident wage labor, and in the rice area the large holdings are divided into farms of a one-family size and are operated by tenants.

#### Facility of Acquiring Ownership

The ease with which ownership can be achieved is a factor that involves a complexity of indices. Some of the most apparent indices are the relation between land values per acre and farm incomes, the size of farms that are available for purchase, the opportunity for non-farm work to supplement the farm income of the laborer or tenant, and the availability of credit easy enough to enable the purchaser to pay for the land in a reasonable length of time and flexible enough so as not to lower his minimum standard of living or cause the loss of ownership during periods of poor financial returns. The location of Negro ownership in the poorer areas adjoining the better agricultural lands where there is a concentration of Negro tenants is indicative of the validity of the factors. Also the areas of a high degree of white ownership is on the poorer lands with low land values and those areas near non-farm industries such as New Orleans, Shreveport, Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Ruston, Bogalusa and other towns. Some of these places occupy such a geographic position



that the tendency is not shown when the intensity of ownership is mapped on a ward basis.

The amount of new land available for settlement is limited for the entire United States. The low productivity of the land in Bienville Parish; the high cost of making land tillable by clearing, breaking and draining in Madison, Richland, East Carroll, and Morehouse Parishes; or the high cost of dikes, ditches and pumps in the reclaiming of swamp land in the southern part of the State makes the tenure of ownership in these new land areas rather questionable in all characteristics except that of statistical ownership.

The sentimental values attached to land in the South make it extremely difficult for a purchaser to pay for the farm from the products raised on the farm. Only a very capable purchaser can buy traditions, turn them into agricultural assets, and convince the buying public that those traditions add to the value of the agricultural products.

#### Retirement of Owners

Owners of rented farms in the South supervise the tenants to a large extent, there being 65 per cent of all those in the South classed as farmers in 1920.<sup>41</sup> Only eight per cent were without occupation (retired) and the remaining 27 per cent worked in occupations other than agriculture. Since only a few of the older farm owners retire, the younger men have greater difficulty in achieving ownership. The fact that the owners continue to supervise the tenants also prevents the tenants from

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<sup>41</sup> H. A. Turner, op. cit., p. 39.





making the responsibilities of operating a farm. These phenomena are all a part of the plantation system as it has developed in the South.

### Migration

The excessive moving from farm to farm is usually listed as one of the evils of tenancy. The 1935 Agricultural Census reported 59.6 per cent of the white croppers and 44.5 per cent of the colored croppers as living on the present farm for less than two years in Louisiana. By comparison ten per cent of the owners had occupied their farms for less than two years. If a tenant is moving up the agricultural ladder and his family is changing in size, this rate of migration possibly might not be excessive. However, if he moves to satisfy a whim or for only imagined better conditions, half of the tenants moving every two years is probably excessive. Rather than excessive migration being an evil of tenancy, further study might possibly show that it is an evil of a futile attempt to achieve farm ownership. Williams has discussed the functions of migration as follows: "In early life while getting settled and while making adjustments to the size and type of farm suited to him, the farmer may do some moving to good advantage. As a matter of fact, many of the most successful farmers have done just that. But continuous, excessive moving throughout the life of the tenant farmer, especially, thwarts the doing of those things which make for provident farming and an adequate standard of living."

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42 E. C. Williams, "Mobility and Farm Tenancy", Journal of Land and Public Utility Economics, Vol. XIV, (1938) p. 208.



Farm owners move from farm to farm less than the average tenants, but a low index of mobility may be associated with a type of tenant. This characteristic will be used to describe rather than to classify all of the types of tenants.

#### Farm Mortgages

The census shows the percentage of farms in Louisiana that are mortgaged to have increased from 16 per cent in 1900 to 33 per cent in 1930. Although ownership is less complete than formerly, there has been no great increase (11.4 per cent) in the number of farm owners. In other words the increased mortgaging of farms has not accomplished a proportionate increase in the number of farm owners, but has only maintained the existing number and increased that number 11.4 per cent while the number mortgaged had increased 114.6 per cent during the same period.

#### Good Relation of Tenant to Landlord

In many cases, particularly in the North, tenants are related to the landlord. Under such conditions tenancy may serve as a desirable working arrangement during the time when the father or father-in-law is retiring from active operation of the farm and the son or son-in-law is assuming full responsibility.... The general fact has been noted by many observers that tenants who are sons or sons-in-law of their landlords are more inclined than other tenants toward farming practices aimed at conservation of the land and the maintenance of improvements, for many of the related tenants expect to become owners and probably most of them work under the general supervision of their landlord. On the other hand, a man's relatives can be hard taskmasters...<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Report of the President's Committee on Farm Tenancy, op. cit., p. 47.





This description has to do specifically with farming in the North although in the Hill lands and in the French speaking section of Louisiana a similar situation occurs to some extent. The 1935 Agricultural Census reported 32.3 per cent of the tenants of LaSalle Parish as being related to their landlord. Other hill parishes with over 20 per cent related to the landlord were Winn, Bienville, Sabine, Vernon, and Union. Also over 20 per cent were Tangipahoa, St. Helena, Livingston, St. James, St. John, St. Martin, Assumption, Lafourche, Terrebonne, Iberia, Vermillion, Acadia, and Cameron Parishes. With the exception of the first three, these latter parishes are inhabited by French speaking people. The agricultural technicians reported that in many cases there is a real feeling of partnership between landlord and tenant with sometimes one and sometimes the other taking the lead in the active management of the farm. Because of large families and a limit to the income to be derived from the farms in the hill area, all of the family cannot be tenants on the home farm. Many of the farms cannot support two families except with a considerable decrease in the standard of living. Another limit to the tenant being related to the landlord is the fact of white ownership and Negro tenants in the delta areas. The white landlord often feels toward the Negro tenant as he would toward his own son--even to the point of getting him started as a farm owner. The question of size of farm also affects the number of tenants who can be related to the landlord. On large plantations with 100 or more tenants only a few can possibly be related to the landlord.



### Written Lease

Whether the agreement between the landlord and the tenant is written or oral is more a measure of a formal business method as compared with an informal personal relationship. The details of a written lease vary from a simple statement that the tenant will be a cropper or 1/4 hand on the landlord's farm for a period of time to a detailed statement of duties and privileges of each party, signed by both and notarized. The flexible lease form used by the Farm Security Administration is very complete in regard to the production of the crop. However, there are landlord-tenant relationships concerning gifts, commissary, living credit, mutual aid, and other things relative to living that are of greater importance than the production of the crop. Although 20.7 per cent of the tenants and 17.9 per cent of the landlords reported in the questionnaires that they had a written lease, custom plays a large part both in regard to interpretation of the items included in the written lease, and in regard to non-productive phases of the landlord-tenant relationship.

The value of a written lease has been overemphasized by most writers, but if all of the relationships that customarily exist between the tenant and the landlord in the South were included in a written lease, it is doubtful if either the landlord or the tenant would sign it. There is a value to both landlord and tenant for the details of their arrangement to be indefinite so that the details reach a degree of flexibility that is impossible to put in legal terms.

Returns from the questionnaires showed that one-third of all banks, corporations, partnerships, and all other owners except individuals had





written leases with their tenants while only 15 per cent of the individual owners had written leases. There was very little variation among the individual owners. The surprising thing is not the difference in regard to the kind of ownership, but that the legalized, corporate type of ownership used written leases only one-third of the time.

TABLE III

FREQUENCY OF WRITTEN LEASES AS REPORTED  
BY 728 LOUISIANA LANDLORDS AND 457 TENANTS  
BY METHOD OF RENTAL PAYMENT<sup>44</sup>

Source of Report	:	:	Total		Share Renters				Cash and							
			:	Written	:	1/2	:	Other	:	Standing						
											:	Leases	:	Share	:	Renters
No. :	Per :	No. :	Per :	No. :	Per :	No. :	Per :									
:	Number	:	Cent	:	Cent	:	Cent	:	Cent							
Tenant	728	151	20.7	24	9.1	73	22.5	37	48.7							
Landlord	457	82	17.9	15	9.3	30	21.7	10	50.0							

The method of paying rent is another factor affecting the written lease. The landlords considered in determining these percentages are those who had only that kind of tenants. There is some little variation between the returns from the landlords and tenants due to small numbers in any one particular category, but the agreement is fairly close.

<sup>44</sup> There were 17 tenants reported on written leases that failed to report method of rental payment. Only those landlord replies were used in the analysis of method which showed all tenants paying rent by only one method.



About 20 per cent of the cash and standing renters, 20 to 25 per cent of the share renters other than 1/2 bands, and less than 10 per cent of the 1/2 bands had written leases. (Table III.) These differences are to be expected, but again it is surprising that the differences are not greater.

## CHAPTER VI

### TENANT CLASSES IN LOUISIANA

Because the literature has become sprinkled with terms used in connection with tenancy and each writer has given each term his own particular connotation, it is necessary to have a few working definitions for the more common terms as they are used in this study. "It must be recognized that neither the institution of ownership nor the institution of tenancy is everywhere uniform and definite; the words 'tenancy' and 'ownership' become descriptive only when qualified and given definite characteristics."<sup>45</sup> The number of definitions are held at a minimum, and others are developed as the data are analyzed.

Farm tenure: the "bundle of rights" in respect to the use of agricultural land.<sup>46</sup> Complete tenure would indicate all the rights in the land, but since no one person can hold all of the rights, tenure signifies some rights in the land. Everyone has the right to stand on some

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<sup>45</sup> J. A. Baker, Tenure Status and Land Use Patterns in the Corn Belt, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Land Economics Report No. 5, Washington, 1939, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> George S. Wehrwein, "The Field of Research," Research in Agricultural Land Tenure--Scope and Method, Social Science Research Council Bulletin No. 20, New York, 1933, p. 3.





land, and he is likewise given the right to labor on the land for a period of time.

Tenancy: a division in the bundle of rights in the land in regard to use of land.<sup>47</sup> The owner gives or sells some of his rights of using land to other individuals either tenants or laborers. A division of rights, in that the State retains the rights of eminent domain, police power and taxation which it exercises under given conditions, does not constitute tenancy. An owner family taking care of all the farm labor except for technical work as threshing grain, trading work or occasional rush season labor constitutes a relative absence of tenancy.

Farm tenant: a person who pays or agrees to pay rent in the form of cash, goods, or labor for the use of all or part of a farm from which he will derive part or all of his income. All such persons receiving all payments are included in this definition of tenants which is identical with census definition of a tenant and includes the cropper.<sup>48</sup> Tenants are usually classified by the method of rental payment such as: cash tenant paying a cash amount for the use of a definite acreage or for the entire farm, the standing renter paying in terms of a stated amount of

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<sup>47</sup> This concept is an extension of Wehrwein's definition of tenure, Ibid. A similar idea is also expressed by A. W. Ashley, "Farm Tenancy", Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, New York, 1937, Vol. VI, p. 118-122; and Karl Brandt, "Farm Tenancy in the United States," Social Research, (May, 1937) Vol. 4, No. 2, pp. 133-156.

<sup>48</sup> The United States Census of Agriculture, 1935, Washington, 1937, Vol. II, pp. V-VI.



produce, the share tenant paying a share of the crop, the cash-share tenant paying rent for one crop by one method and on another crop by another method, and the labor tenant paying rent in the form of labor for the maintenance or improvement of the landlord's farm. The cropper is not mutually exclusive of the other groups, but is a tenant who owns no workstock or tractor.

### General Criteria

Beginning with the idea that tenancy is a division in the bundle of rights or a division of the functions of farming it is important to decide what the functions of farming are. The functions of farming are usually divided into four major groups, land, labor, capital, and entrepreneurship. The landowner furnishes the land and that part of his labor which may be regarded as managerial. His time, experience, and prestige in the community are important in dealing with others for getting credit, and marketing the crop; so he is allowed a theoretical income for those services. After all expenses including interest on investment are subtracted from the gross expenses, the resulting net income is counted as labor income. If the operator does no labor other than management, that income is for management.<sup>49</sup> The proportion of production capital furnished by landlord and tenant varies greatly. The tenant may be in position to finance his production from his own funds or to secure credit entirely apart from the influence of the landlord. On the other hand the

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<sup>49</sup> In John A. Hopkins, Farm Records, Ames, 1936, pp. 77-78 this profit is called "return on management."

1. The first part of the paper discusses the importance of the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that a knowledge of the past is essential for a full understanding of the present and for the development of a sound policy for the future.

2. The second part of the paper discusses the role of the government in the development of the United States. It is argued that the government has played a crucial role in the development of the country, and that its actions have been guided by a set of principles that have been developed over the years.

3. The third part of the paper discusses the role of the individual in the development of the United States. It is argued that the individual has played a crucial role in the development of the country, and that his actions have been guided by a set of principles that have been developed over the years.



landlord may and often does furnish capital or credit, both for production purposes and for living expenses.

The traditional idea about risk taking is that the cash tenant takes the greatest risk, the standing renter the next greatest, and the share tenants follow in proportion to the part of the crop that they get. Where the cash rent is too high for the productivity of the soil, the cash tenant has a great risk, but a low income from his investment is practically a certainty. The owner is certain of his rent if he can collect it, but the tenant may have only one year out of ten that he can get any income from his risk. Under any circumstances, the tenant must live, and the landlord often lowers the rent, continuing it to the next year or canceling it altogether. Where paternalism exists, risk should be measured by different criteria than in situations where the production of the crop is the only landlord-tenant relationship.

#### Method of Analysis of Control Factors

The primary factor used to classify tenancy situations in this study is a combination of several indices which measure the degree to which the tenant and landlord divide the functions of credit (capital) and management (labor and entrepreneurship). This criteria cuts across other factors such as race, method of paying rent, size of farm, type-of-farming, written form of lease, relation of tenant to landlord, and other conventional classifications. The exact indices that were used to measure what might well be called the control of the landlord over the tenant, are: (1) the frequency of supervision by the landlord, (2) the landlord's part in marketing the tenant's share of the crop, (3) the



tenant's freedom to work other than for the landlord, (4) the presence of a commissary on the farm, (5) proportion of production credit supplied by landlord and tenant, (6) the landlord's part in supplying credit for tenant's living expenses, and (7) the nearness of landlord's residence to tenant's farm. All of these items are given equal weight (index number of 1) except that the frequency of supervision if daily was counted as 4, if weekly as 3, if monthly as 2, and if occasionally as 1. Because of small numbers and little difference in the analysis, the two groups with the highest amounts of control resulting from the tenant's replies were combined. As the landlords were not asked if permission was required for the tenants to work off the farm, this procedure resulted in ten classes, varying from zero (0) control to an index number of 9, for both tenant and landlord questionnaires. Only those questionnaires were used that showed relevant answers to all items used in measuring the amount of control, reducing the number of questionnaires used for this purpose to 443 tenant and 347 landlord questionnaires.

#### Analysis of Groups Based on Control

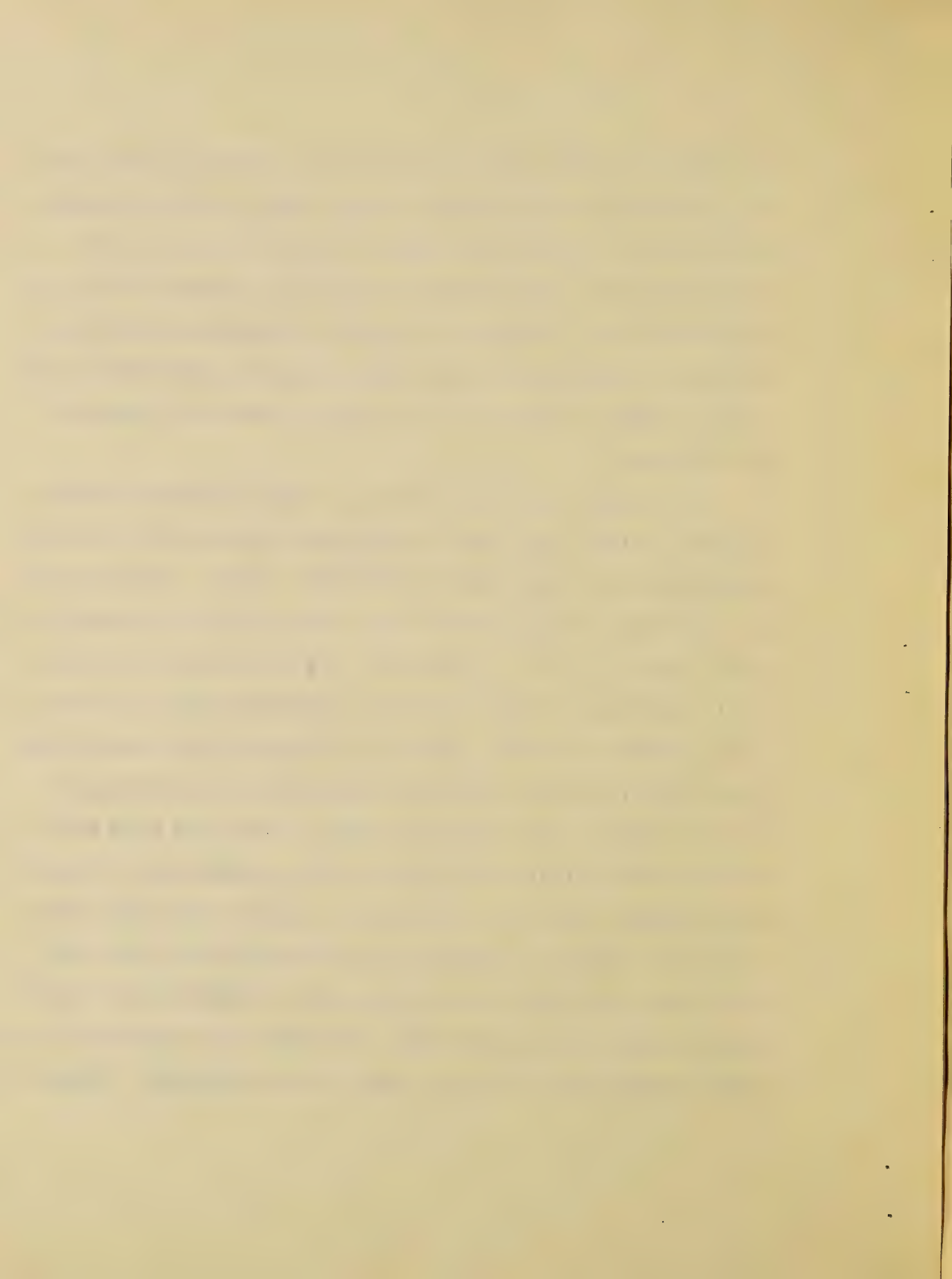
An analysis of these cases shows that as control increases the percentage of tenants who are croppers, the percentage who work for wages on the landlord's farm, the percentage who are colored, and the size of farm (measured by the average number of families per farm) increases. (Figure 7.) The lines representing these data are not entirely straight, but the major trends are very definite. Some of the classes are represented by small numbers which may account for some of the variations.





According to the 1935 Agricultural Census 60 per cent of all the tenants of Louisiana were colored, and the analysis shows a range of from about 50 per cent for the independent tenants to over 90 per cent for the supervised tenants. This suggests that race (to a limited extent), size of landlord's farm, the tenant's ownership of workstock, and the tenant working as a wage laborer for the landlord might be substituted for the control indices as a measure of the amount of control the landlord has over the tenant.

The average age of both landlord and tenant decreased as control increased. However, the owners providing the most supervision had been owners longer than those with more independent tenants. The Negro landlords show the highest percentage in the middle group which represents an average amount of control. (Figure 8.) The use of tractors increased, and the percentage of tenants with home gardens decreased from medium to extreme amounts of control. (Figure 10.) Probably these items are associated with size of farm rather than with tenancy. The percentage of tenants related to the landlord was highest in the middle group with a decrease under conditions of no control and an extreme amount of control. The independent tenants were slightly less migratory than those closely supervised. This characteristic is less trustworthy than some of the others since many tenants moving between 1937 and 1939 failed to receive the questionnaires. The percentage of both owners and tenants with written leases decreased slightly as the amount of control increased. (Figure 9.)



About 25 per cent of the tenants were on relief, but there was no definite increase or decrease with a change in the amount of control. About 25 per cent of the tenants received gifts from the landlord, but again there was no particular correlation.

The terms "cropper" and "half hand" have different definitions but are sometimes used interchangeably. Data from the questionnaires show that 89.7 per cent of the croppers were half hands and 24.2 per cent of the half hands were croppers. (Table IV.) In other words about 90 per cent of the time the two terms are synonymous. It is to be noted that a few tenants in every class of rental payment were croppers.

TABLE IV

FREQUENCY OF CROPPERS FOR EACH METHOD OF RENTAL PAYMENT  
IN LOUISIANA AS INDICATED BY REPLIES FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

	Number Reporting	Number of Croppers	Per cent of Croppers	Per cent of Tenants in Each Class Who Were Croppers
All Tenants	846	363		42.9
Total reporting rental payment	729	326	100.0	44.7
Cash Tenants	54	8	2.5	14.8
Standing Renters	35	2	0.6	5.7
1/4 Share	221	18	5.5	8.1
1/4-1/3 Share	53	5	1.5	9.4
1/3 Share	85	4	1.2	4.7
1/2 Share	311	293	89.7	94.2





### Classes of Tenants

On the basis of control by landlord the tenants were divided arbitrarily into three groups--the independent tenants consisting of those cases with index numbers from 0 to 2, the middle group ranging from 3 to 6 and the closely supervised tenant continuing from an index number of 7 to 10.<sup>20</sup> These breaks were selected because the majority of the descriptive factors appeared to change at these points, although there are no very sharp breaks. Several subtypes were identified by the agricultural technicians and by evidence apparent in the data from the questionnaires. These subtypes are not complete but represent only a few groups in each major type. The names represent the chief characteristics of the group identified. The relationship of the types and subtypes of tenants can best be shown in a diagrammatic way.

#### TYPES OF TENANTS

##### Independent

- Manager-tenants
- Family-farm Managing-tenants
- Rice Tenants

##### Apprenticeship

- Owner-tenants

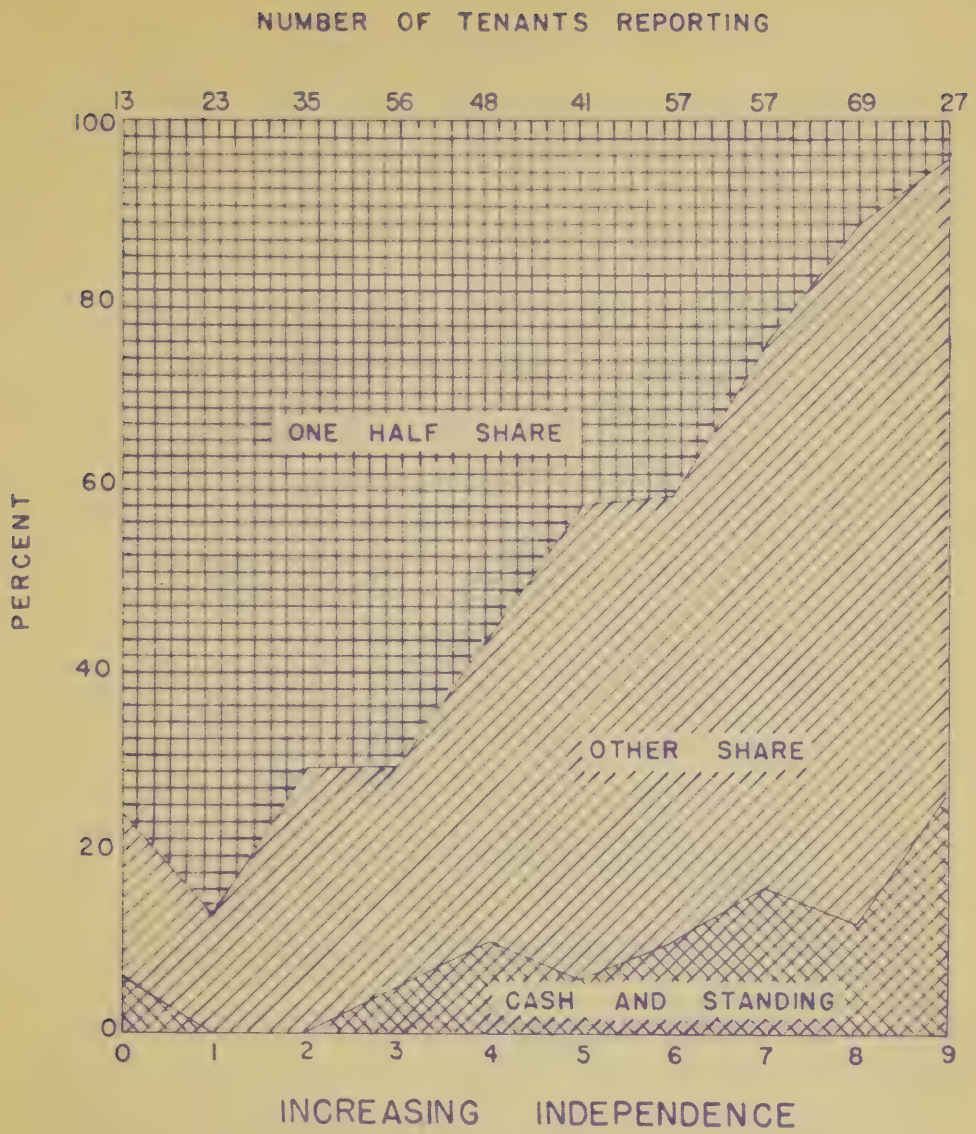
##### Supervised

- Supervised Production Tenants
- Paternalistic Tenants

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<sup>20</sup> See Figures 8 - 10, pp. 58-62. The application of index numbers is explained on pp. 53 and 54.





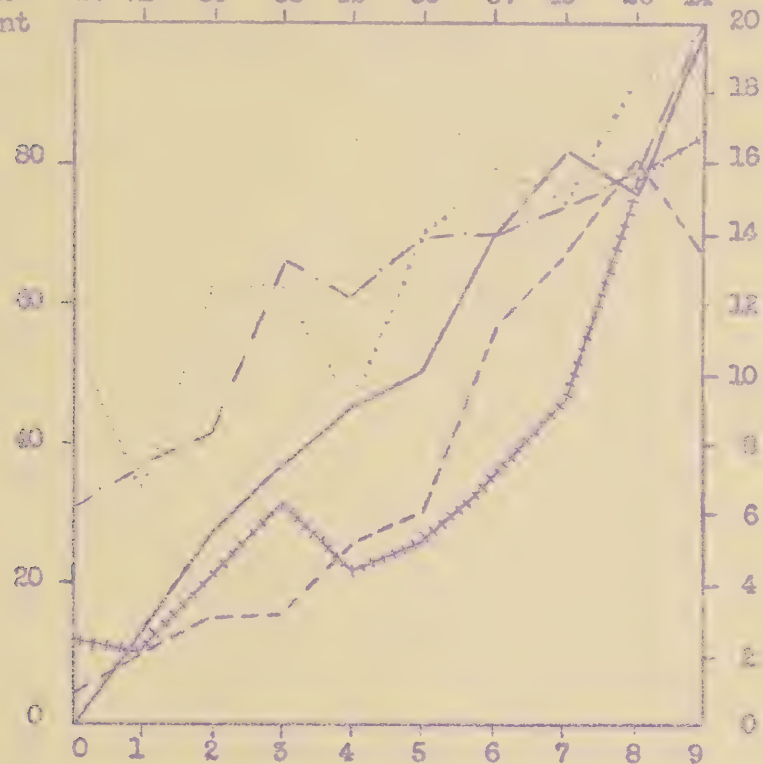
<sup>6</sup>  
Figure 17 - Relation of Rental Payment to Independence of Tenant.





Number of Cases in each Group

Landlord	14	33	19	18	27	43	47	76	63	11
Tenant	27	71	58	58	42	50	57	40	26	14
Percent										



Index Number Indicating Amount of Control\*

Legend

Croppers	—————
Wage labor on landlord's farm	- - - - -
Colored families on farm (Tenant Replies)	.....
Colored families on farm (Landlord Replies)	.....
Average number of families per farm	+++++

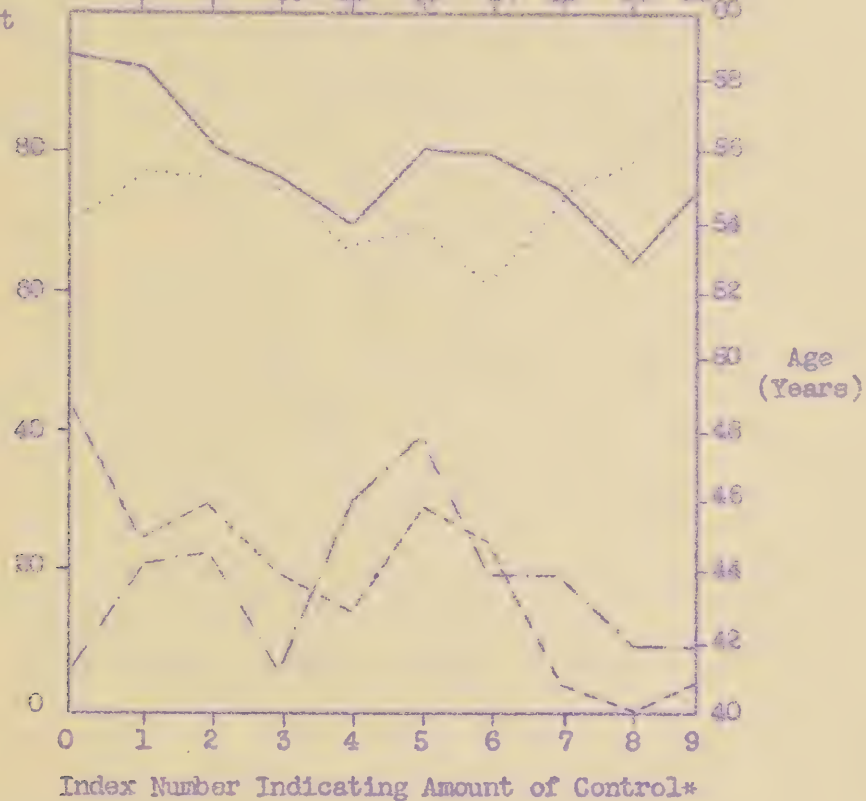
\* See p. 53 for the indices used to measure control.

Figure 7. Landlord-tenant Characteristics that Increase with Increasing Control of the Landlord over the Tenant.



Number of Cases in each Group:

Landlord	14	33	19	18	27	43	47	76	63	11	00
Tenant	27	71	58	58	42	30	57	40	26	34	00
Percent											



#### Legend

Landlord's Average Age	—————
Tenant's Average Age	- - - - -
Landlords with over 15 years' experience	.....
Colored Landlords	-. - . - .

\*See p. 53 for the indices used to measure control.

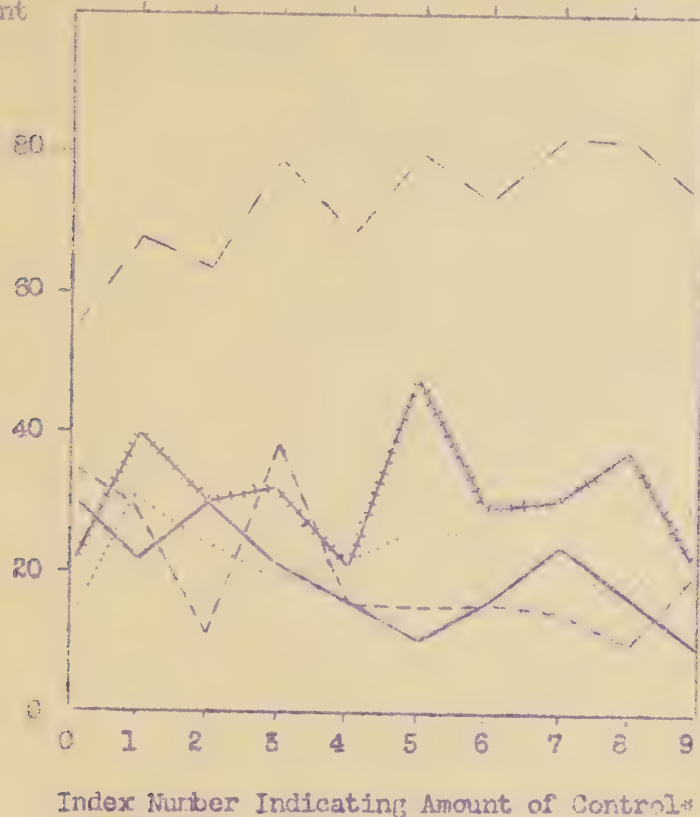
Figure 8. Landlord-tenant Characteristics that Show Moderate Variation with Change in Control of the Landlord Over the Tenant.





Number of Cases in each Group:

Landlord	14	35	19	18	27	43	47	76	63	11
Tenant	27	71	58	58	42	50	37	40	26	14
Percent										

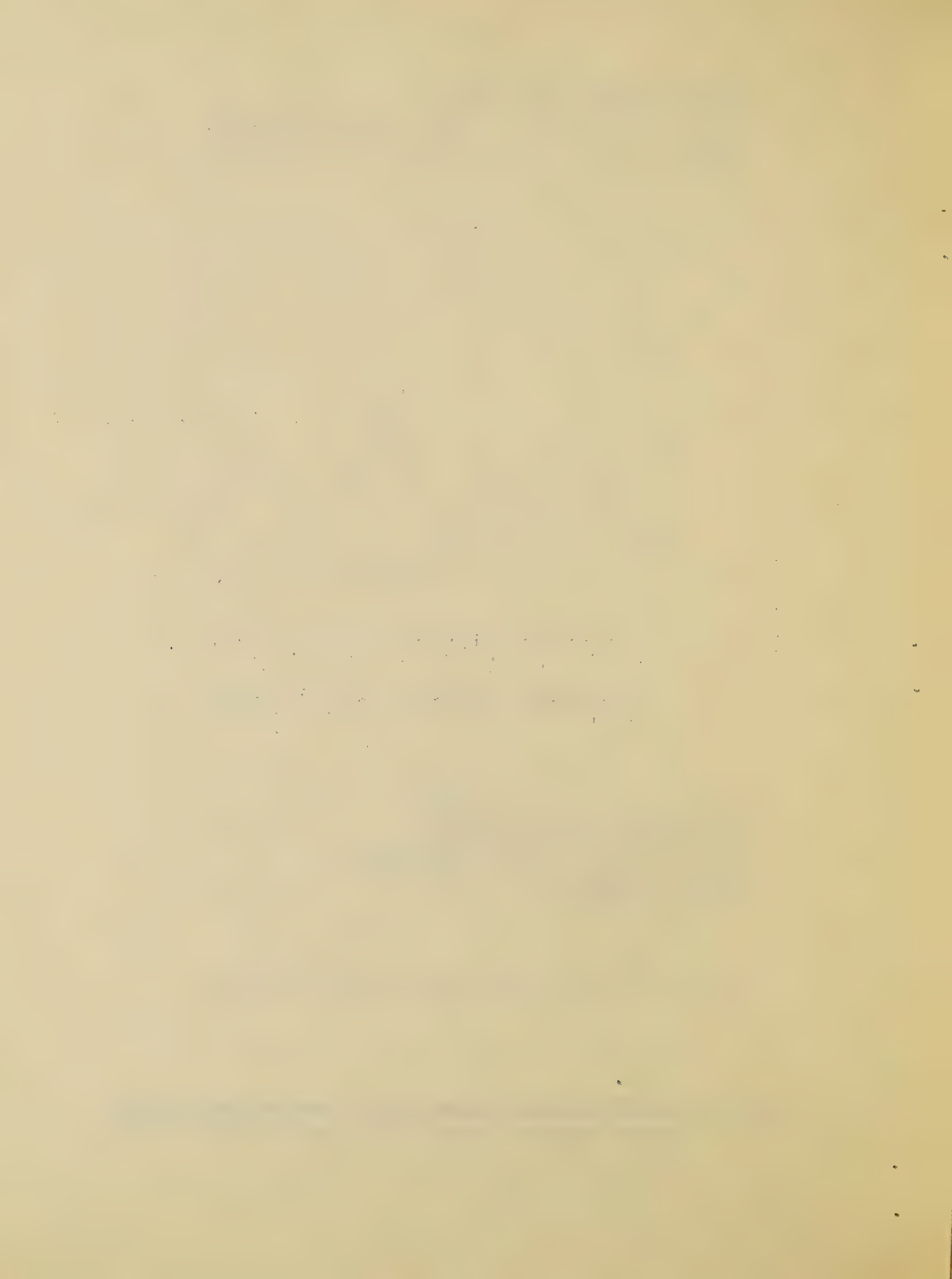


Legend

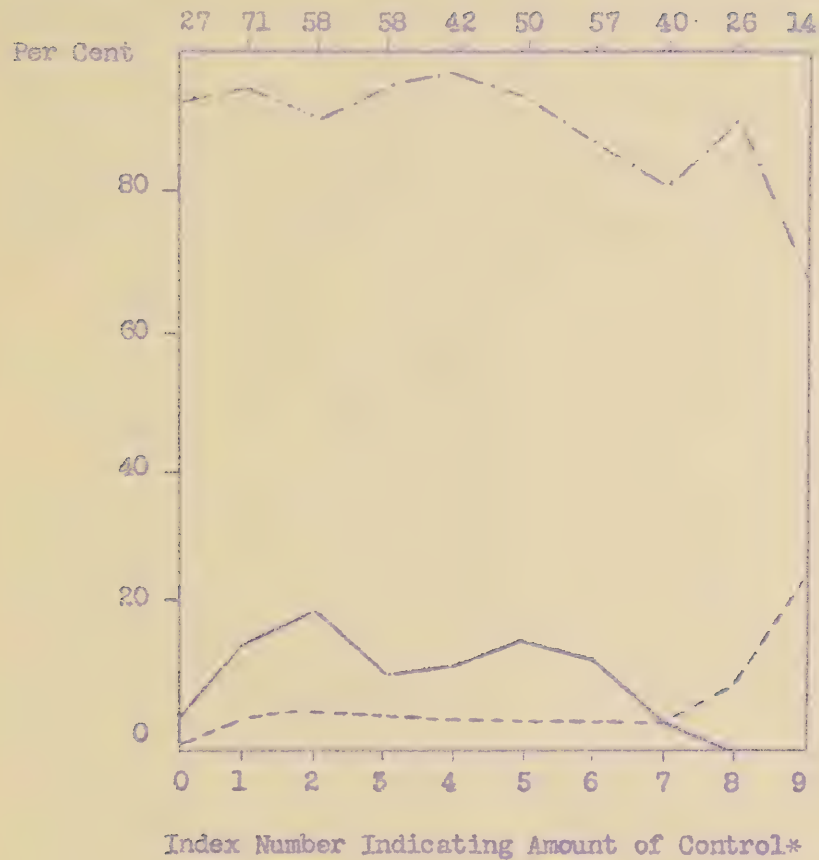
Tenants Reporting Written Lease	—————
Landlords Reporting Written Lease	- - - - -
Tenants on present farm 10 years and less	- . - . - .
Tenants receiving gifts from landlord	. . . . .
Tenants on Relief	- - - - -

\* See p. 53 for the indices used to measure control.

Figure 9. Landlord-tenant Characteristics that Vary Only Slightly With a Change in Control of the Landlord Over the Tenant.



No. of Tenants Reporting



Legend

Tenants with Gardens	.....
Tenants Related to Landlord	————
Farms with Tractors	-----

\* See p. 53 for the indices used to measure control.

Figure 19. Landlord-Tenant Characteristics that Vary with Extreme Control of the Landlord over the Tenant.





No specific criteria were used to divide the types into sub-groups. The scientific analysis stops with the three major types and the sub-types are merely identified, described, and located geographically where there appeared to be a concentration. The main descriptive features of the Independent tenants is given under the family-farm managing-tenant while the other major types are described as major types rather than sub-types.

### Independent Tenants

#### 1. Manager-tenant

In the sugar bowl and to a lesser extent in the delta cotton area, some of the tenants rent large farms (plantations) paying a cash rent or a share rent less than usual for the community. The owners are absentee, merely collecting rent and paying taxes. These tenants usually have a written lease for a longer period of time than one year or have a renewal clause. This type of independent tenant employs laborers, subleases to tenants, or uses both to get the annual labor of farming done. His income is the result of management and investment in production tools with little or no income from his own unskilled labor. The manager-tenant is a landlord to his tenants if subleasing takes place. This type of tenant is numerically unimportant in Louisiana. The description is taken from interviews with the agricultural technicians although there is considerable other evidence that the situation exists. Four out of the five tenants who had over 50 acres in crops were independent tenants.



## 2. Family-farm Managing-tenant

The manager-tenant shades into this class with some independent tenants renting a tract of land too large for them to do all the work with the tenant's family and yet not large enough to employ labor or sublease to the extent that the tenant does little or no manual labor. This type of tenant rents all of a small farm or part of a large farm and operates it independently of the owner, who is absentee. There were 94.0 per cent of the independent tenants with less than 25 acres of land in cash crops. There were 92.3 per cent of independent tenants who rented all of the landlord's farm. Although in general this tendency was greater where there was greater independence, one independent tenant who had an index number of zero was located on a farm with over ten families.

The questionnaires show that only 17.8 per cent of the independent tenants paid a cash and standing rent. This percentage is probably lower than is actually the case as many cash tenants were not listed in the list of tenants from which the sample mailing list was taken. Although there was a larger percentage of tenants in this group than in the other groups paying cash and standing rent, a larger proportion of the independent tenants paid a share rent than cash. Only 15.7 per cent were half hands, and only 16.2 per cent were croppers.

The independent tenants had the largest percentage with written leases (26.9 per cent), a larger percentage were related to the landlord, and a smaller percentage were no relief than for the other major types of tenants. The independent tenants were older than other tenants as a smaller percentage were under 35 and a larger percentage were over 55 years of age.





Although some of these tenants are in all parts of the State, they make up a large part of the tenants on the upland cotton, the rice areas, and the truck and vegetable areas than in other areas. In the areas named most of the tenants are white although those sections near the Delta areas have as much as 30 per cent colored population. In those areas west of Shreveport, north of Baton Rouge, and west of Vicksburg there are a considerable number of Negro tenants of this type paying a cash or standing rent for the use of part of a large farm. The owners of these farms are absentees in body and in spirit, the chief contact with the tenants often occurring at the home of the owner rather than on the farm itself. The tenants in suburban areas farming on a city lot basis usually pay a cash rent and are in the main independent although the owner of the land may live next door. These tenants are usually of Italian descent and raise truck crops.

### 3. Rice Tenant

The rice tenant is in a category by himself. The usual arrangement is for the tenant to pay 3/5 share rent for the use of land and 1/5 share to the canal company for the use of irrigation water. Some variations occur in the case of deep wells or if the canal company also owns the land. Only 13 tenants with rice were considered, and ten of them were in the independent group. The yearly crop management is chiefly in the hands of the canal company and the Jennings Production Credit Association, although the long-time use of land is handled by the owner and/or the tenant. Rice is raised on a tract of land one year and then the land is allowed to be "dry" for two years. This procedure is caused by production problems to maintain the quality of the rice and the practice affects the



tenancy situation. In Calcasieu and Jeff Davis Parishes there is a tendency to operate the entire 140 acre farm as one field with rice one year and the pasturing of cattle on the entire farm for the other two years. For two years out of three the farm owner rents rice land and is himself a tenant. This is indicated by the 1930 Census, which reported that 41 per cent of the farm owners in Jeff Davis and 43 per cent of those in Calcasieu Parish rented additional land in 1934 for rice production.

In the eastern part of the rice area a complete rotation of crops occurs on each farm. Often there is a share tenant raising only cotton who works as a wage laborer in the production of rice. The rice tenants themselves are similar to those in the rest of the rice area. The cotton tenant is usually colored while the rice tenant is usually white. Other operators employ resident Negro wage laborer families.

In respect to the landlord the rice tenant is independent but other agencies such as credit sources and the canal companies exercise considerable rights over the use of land. Although two types of farm organizations result, the crop rotation necessary to raise rice results in peculiar labor needs, and the organization differs considerably from those of cotton or sugar cane.

#### Apprenticeship Tenant

The chief characteristic of this type of tenant is that he is an average of the independent tenant and the supervised tenant. This is true of all characteristics except that the Negro owners of tenant farms are in





greater proportions in this group than in either of the other groups and that the tenants are lowest in written leases. In many respects such as percentage related to the landlord, and the percentage with gardens this type of tenant is more like the independent tenant than the supervised one. In other respects such as working on the landlord's farm for wages, percentage on relief, percentage croppers and percentage half hands he is more like the supervised tenant. When age is considered, these tenants have not reached the independent stage yet, but probably many of them will as they get older, hence the idea of apprenticeship. The percentage over 35 years of age is only slightly less than for the independent tenants; so perhaps many will never get to be independent tenants. Judging from the age distribution fewer of the apprenticeship tenants become independent than supervised tenants become apprenticeship tenants.

Although the apprenticeship tenant is located in all areas to a greater extent than any other type, the greatest concentrations are in the more densely settled non-delta areas such as Claiborne, Webster, Bienville, the all lands of Bossier and Caddo, St. Landry, Acadia, Evangeline, Lafayette, St. Helena, and the Feliciana Parishes. In the delta areas this type of tenant is old while in these areas of a high degree of ownership he is on the way to ownership and is a relatively young man. The older in the delta areas often subleases to younger tenants although he is himself supervised to a considerable extent. This practice is an excellent opportunity for an old Negro tenant without much capital to realize some income from his knowledge of farming (managerial ability) gained through experience.



### 1. Owner-tenant

This type of tenant includes several different situations. One of the heirs inheriting a farm owned by the estate, has partial ownership of the farm and yet pays rent and receives supervision in one way or another from the other heirs. A Belgian and a Hungarian settlement in Repulse Parish are organized on about the same basis with the will of the group (improved chiefly by the landers) determining the farming practices although each member has an equity in the farm. A third group are those tenants in Farm Security projects at Schriener, in Terrebonne Parish and at Tremplerville and Thibodaux in East Carroll and Madison Parishes. There the tenants have formed cooperative associations which direct the farming operations and each tenant deals with the association. A government employee is "advisor" and has control over not only crop production but also personal expenditures and budgeting. After several years of supervision and advice the plan is that the tenants will be able to organize their own business without government aid except possibly credit.

This type is numerically unimportant, and the tenants are located in the described areas with the "estate" farmer being scattered throughout the State. These tenants were not identified from the control scale but from data secured by interviews with agricultural workers in the field.

### Supervised Tenant

The supervised tenants are divided into two groups--those supervised throughout the year and those supervised only for the period during which the crop is being produced. Over 80 per cent of the cases in the supervised





tenant class are the traditional Negro sharecropper in the Delta cotton area living on plantations. The landlords of tenants in this group are 86 per cent white and although they were younger than the landlords in the other groups (51 per cent over 55 years of age), they have had more experience than the other landlords (92 per cent have been owners over 10 years).

An analysis of some of the other characteristics shows a decrease in the percentage of tenants with gardens and a slight increase for those who are on relief over those tenants in the other groups. As could be expected on the larger farms, a smaller percentage (2.8 per cent) are related to the landlord. It is rather surprising that a slightly smaller percentage of the supervised tenants reported gifts from the landlords than the other tenants. Perhaps there is more real paternalism on the smaller farms with independent tenants than occurs on the plantations. The large number of tenants receiving the gifts makes it appear to the landlords on the plantation that he is more paternalistic than is really the case.

There are 71.6 per cent of these tenants who worked for wages on the landlord's farm. In many cases the income from labor exceeded that from the tenant's crop, and those tenants might well be classified as laborers with part time spent as tenants. The fact that 42.5 per cent of the supervised tenants are under 35 years of age suggests another close similarity to wage laborers.

#### 1. Supervised Production Tenant

These tenants are--as indicated by the name--supervised only for the duration of the crop. The relationship of landlord and tenant exists only



for the production of the one yearly crop. These tenants are found on commercial plantations in the Red River delta and in the Morehouse, Franklin, Richland tier of parishes.

## 2. Paternalistic Tenant

The tenants with complete subordination (paternalistic tenants) and paternalism existing from generation to generation are located in those parishes along the Mississippi River and to a lesser extent the Red River Delta. These situations represent landlords with the greatest amount of control, and the descriptive characteristics of the tenants are more pronounced.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Physiographic factors such as climate and soil permit land to be used for farming purposes and for certain types-of-farming enterprises that in turn permit tenancy or wage labor to exist profitably. The distribution of the population also affects the use made of land and is likewise a pervasive factor. The laws and customs affecting the size of holdings, methods of land division and land settlement, inheritance and type of ownership in land (fee simple, and restrictions against racial and foreign groups) limit the possibility of all farmers being owners of the land where they labor. Differential economic and social status, the differential background of environmental conditioning in developing abilities, wants and the means of securing those wants make for different realizable objectives in farm life that result in tenancy or wage laborers.





Age affects the wealth and ability of the farmer so that it is difficult for all farmers to assume the responsibilities of ownership. Particular attributes of race, age, and blood relationship to owner, have a definite effect upon the tenancy situation.

Farm tenancy as a division of the functions of farming is a phase of farm tenure (which also includes owner and laborer). The essential difference in the category is that of a difference in the amount of control over the use of land and the instrument of production. In classifying tenants, the indices used in measuring control the landlord retains over the tenant are: the frequency of supervision by the landlord, the securing of production credit and credit for living from the landlord, the landlord's selecting the tenant's crop, the presence of a commissary on the farm, the freedom to work other than for the landlord, and the nearness of the landlord's residence to the farm. This measure of control indicated living as well as production since the two are so closely related in Louisiana.

The variation of other characteristics with changes in the amount of control is determined by using data from questionnaires sent to samples of farm landlords and tenants selected from 1987 AAA records. As control of the landlord over the tenant increased the percentage of the tenants who were Negroes increased, the percentage who were half hand increased, the percentage who worked on the landlord's farm for wages increased, the percentage of tenants who were without workstock increased, and the average number of families per landlord's farm increased. To a lesser degree as control increased, the age of the tenant decreased, the age of owner



decreased, the percentage of tenants with home gardens decreased, and the use of tractors increased. Some of these characteristics such as the use of tractors are dependent upon size of farm.

Data from interviews with agricultural workers who deal directly with the farm people are used to supplement the questionnaire data. The three major types are: the independent tenant who operates his farm with little control by the landlord, the supervised tenant who is controlled to the greatest degree, and the apprenticeship tenant who is partially independent and partially supervised. Although apprenticeship usually implies growth in duties and responsibilities, such may or may not be the case with this type of tenant. He is, however, in position to exercise some of the functions of management.

A further division of tenants results in eight types of tenants. The paragar-tenant is independent and subleases to other tenants or uses wage laborers to perform the manual labor of farming. His income is from management and investment in production goods but does not include manual labor. The family-farm managing-tenant rents all of a small farm or operates part of a large farm independently of the owner. The Pice tenant is also independent but is supervised by the organization supplying irrigation water and credit. All of these independent tenants are granted most of the rights in the use of land by the owner, but they use the rights in different ways, delegating different amounts of them to others. The owner-tenant is a subdivision of the apprenticeship type of tenant who has partial ownership in the land and also acts as a tenant. This is





made possible when the farm is owned by an estate and the tenant is one of the heirs. The Farm Security project farms and a few farms owned by groups are organized on a similar basis with the tenant having a limited fraction of ownership in addition to being partially supervised as a result. The supervised tenants are divided into those supervised only for the duration of the crop year and those with a generation-after-generation paternalistic type of relationship between landlord and tenant.

### Prerequisites to Considerations of Tenancy

Because of the many suggestions and plans for tenancy improvement, a few generalizations in the way of warnings or prerequisites to tenancy study, especially in regard to evaluation, are pertinent:

1. Farm wage labor must be included with farm ownership as a possible alternative of tenancy. Wage labor is the usual tenure status of young men who have only their labor as an instrument of production. This is usually acknowledged, but the possibility advanced here is that of wage labor being a life-long tenure status.

2. Measuring size of farm in terms of the number of families provides a universal index of size of farm that is more meaningful than most other indices. A measure in terms of acres or dollars is significant only within a local area.

3. Great importance has been attached to a definition of "farm" and "farm operator" by many writers. In considering tenancy as a division of a bundle of rights held by the owner of the land, it might be well to begin the definition of a farm from the point of view of an ownership.



unit rather than an operating unit.

4. Tenancy in the South is not entirely a question of race since about one-half of the tenants of Louisiana in 1935 were white. In local areas, however, race is of great importance, and any tenancy program must take the factor of race into consideration.

5. The method of paying rent, like measuring size of farms in terms of acres, has significance only within local areas. The characteristics of the cash tenant on a Southern plantation are far different from those of the cash tenant of Iowa. Some other classification of tenants must be developed, such as control as is used in this study, that has a more universal application.

6. Large holdings are definite limits to family-sized operating units. Because of the social prestige attached to the ownership of plantations in the South, the dividing of the plantations into smaller holdings would be very difficult even by government action. It is quite likely that the operation of the large farms as plantation units on the productive soils is better for all concerned than any other method when the backgrounds of both landlord and tenant are considered. Therefore, improvements of the landlord-tenant relationships in a plantation system should be investigated thoroughly rather than condemning the entire system.

7. The perquisites that are determined by custom and have no legal basis are sometimes more important than those arrangements, written or oral, that can be proven in court. To change this part of the landlord-tenant relationship would necessitate radical readjustments in the attitudes and thinking of both landlord and tenant. New details must be







included into the arrangements to take their place if the perquisites are to be omitted. An oral agreement based on custom and personal relations is more flexible to meet seasonal changes in yields and prices than any written instrument can possibly be, and possibly more just.

8. In considering all kinds of farm organizations, cognizance should be taken of the life cycle of the family. At different times in the life cycle there are varying amounts of labor available and varying incomes needed to carry on the business of living. It is usually impractical to increase or decrease the size of farm in terms of acres. A more practical plan would be to make the change in terms of intensity of production if sufficient credit were available for such changes. This plan has definite limitations but is better economically and socially than moving to a different farm to satisfy the changing needs of the family.

9. Also associated with the life cycle of the farm family is security, especially as it is applied to old people. The question should be answered more definitely as to whether a paternalistic type of security with the owner of large farms taking care of the old and helpless workers is better or worse than a security that is determined by the individual and is guaranteed by the State. The paternalistic type is rooted in slavery; and the typical white landlord and the Negro sharecropper or wage laborer still approve of the method as being "right."

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with the power of large firms taking care of the old and helpless workers  
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